

Huskers Illustrated

**NEWS
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Volume 21, No. 8

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Notre Dame Next

**Sack
Attack**



champion (chăm'pē-on)

n. 1. A winner of first place in a competition. 2. One who shows marked superiority.



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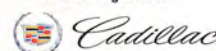
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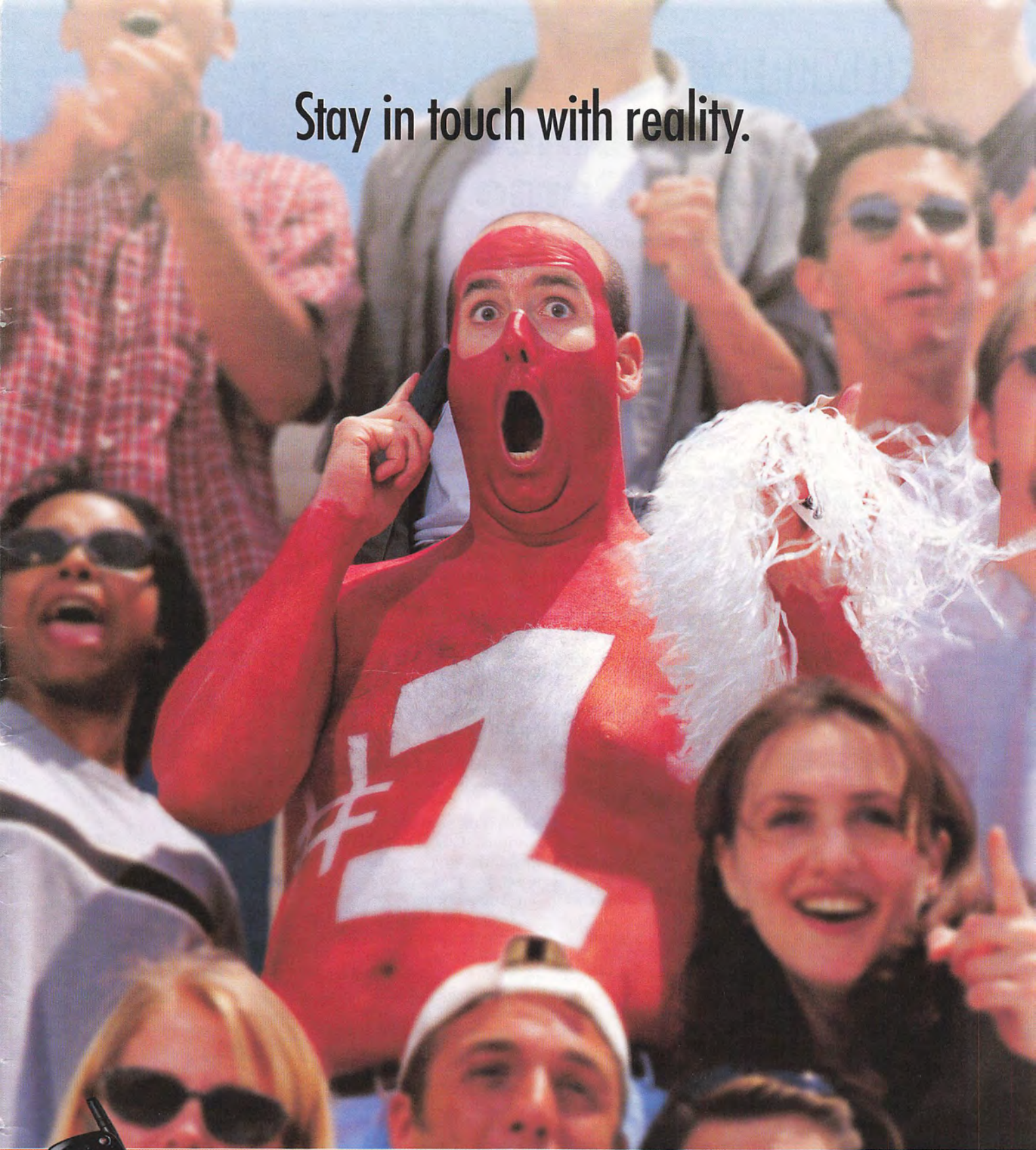
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Here Comes Notre Dame

*Huskers should find out
what they're made of this week*



Brian Hill

FOR BETTER or worse, the preliminaries are over. Through two games, it's been difficult to get a handle on the 2001 Huskers, but we should know a lot more by the end of Notre Dame week.

The most popular college football team in the country, according to a recent ESPN poll of fans (Nebraska finished sixth), will bring its tradition-rich program to Lincoln for Saturday's prime-time battle on ABC. The ESPN Game Day crew of Chris Fowler, Lee Corso and Kirk Herbstreit is scheduled to join the festivities, broadcasting live from 9:30-11 Saturday morning at Memorial Stadium.

Popularity and tradition will have nothing to do with the outcome of this game. Nebraska, which showed the nation its following with the well-documented "Sea of Red" at last year's game in South Bend, will have its masses all warmed up by the 7 p.m. (CDT) kickoff.

Though the Huskers have looked less than overwhelming in the first two games, expect them to turn in their best effort against the Fighting Irish. The offense will need to match the intensity the defense has shown thus far.

And then there's the Huskers' trump card.

In a game of this magnitude, you have to like the seasoned veteran Eric Crouch over Irish sophomore Matt LoVecchio. Crouch rushed for 80 yards and three touchdowns, including the game-winner in overtime last year in South Bend.

He has certainly made a believer of Notre Dame Coach Bob Davie.

"He is a player that can truly take the game on his shoulders and go win the

game," Davie said recently. "Because of the position he plays and the scheme they have but most of all because of his ability.

"I don't know their personnel well, and I don't pretend to, but he seems to me to be the most competitive guy they have on that team... he is as tough as any guy on this team, and I bet he is the fastest on that team."

It should be a great one and provide the perfect opportunity for the Huskers to show the nation that they are for real.

You'll find much more about the Nebraska-Notre Dame matchup in this edition of *Huskers Illustrated*. You'll also find complete coverage of Game 2, a 42-14 victory over Troy State.



Contributing editor Mike Babcock has a feature story on cornerback Erwin Swiney, who has battled injuries since starting as a true freshman on Nebraska's 1997 national champion team. Redshirt freshman Lannie Hopkins is the subject of our player profile.

This is the second of our fall editions. Our apologies to those who were confused or upset by the scheduling of our August issue.

As was stated under "Next Issue" on the contents page in our 2001 Football Yearbook (Volume 21, No. 6), the next issue — Volume 21, No. 7 (cover date August) — was mailed Aug. 27 after the Pigskin Classic.

We publish 18 issues per year and could not just add an issue when Nebraska added a 12th regular-season game for this season. We decided to move the August issue back until after the TCU game and before the Troy State game. To give you more information on the Pigskin Classic opponent, we expanded the non-conference section in the football yearbook.

Anyway, we thought we were doing the right thing. Obviously, not everyone agreed.

Sorry about the confusion. We hope you enjoy this issue and the game against that "most popular" team. Who was that again? ■

ON THE COVER

Nose tackle Jon Clanton wraps up Troy State quarterback Brock Nutter for one of Nebraska's eight sacks.
Photo by Scott Bruhn

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Cornerback Erwin Swiney was in the right place at the right time as a true freshman on '97 championship team. *By Mike Babcock*

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Finally a Blackshirt

Even though it was obvious he would be awarded a Blackshirt during a defensive meeting on the Monday before the opener against TCU, Jamie Burrow didn't take it for granted.

"You aren't 100-percent sure," the senior middle linebacker said. "You have an idea. You always have kind of an idea. But sometimes things don't go the way you want them to."

When defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Craig Bohl handed him the black pullover jersey with a white No. 48 on it, however, that was exactly what Burrow wanted — and had worked for.

He had worked hard. But until now, there wasn't much opportunity to earn a Blackshirt. He backed up Carlos Polk the past two seasons and Polk and Jay Foreman the season before that.

"It was nice to get that done finally," Burrow said. "It's a great honor. It's something when you come here on defense that's one of your goals. You want to be a Blackshirt at some point in time. I waited a little longer than what maybe would be ideal. But that made it all the better."

Weakside linebacker Mark Vedral, like Burrow a fifth-year senior, also received a Blackshirt for the first time during the brief ceremony in front of his defensive teammates. Sophomore free safety Willie Amos was the other first-timer among the 12 who earned the coveted practice jerseys.

The others in the initial group of Blackshirts included rush ends Chris Kelsay and Demoiné Adams, tackles Jeremy Slechta and Jason Lohr, strong-side linebacker Scott Shanle, cornerbacks Keyuo Craver, Erwin Swiney and DeJuan Groce and rover-free safety Dion Booker.

Getting a Blackshirt is a "huge deal," said Kelsay, who earned one for the first time last season. "You always feel honored when you receive it, whether you had one before or not."

The number could increase as players assert themselves. And if a player were to not meet his responsibilities, he could lose the right to wear a Blackshirt during practice.

The coaches have "kind of incorporated the philosophy that you can get one taken away," Kelsay said. "Before,



Middle linebacker Jamie Burrow (48) is one of the new Blackshirts. Tackle Jason Lohr (70) is a returning starter.

you didn't see that. But a Blackshirt is a symbol. It's something you've got to live up to. Just because you get one doesn't mean it can't be taken away. Once you get hung up on it or think, 'I've got my Blackshirt now,' that's when you might start slipping. Then Coach can pull it away."

Having a Blackshirt is "not to be taken lightly," Burrow said. "If you're just going out there and going through the motions, if you don't bring any intensity or emotion to practice — or worse yet, a game — then there's no reason for you to keep that Blackshirt. You get it for a reason."

To put on a Blackshirt is to put on a tradition that can be traced to the early 1960s.

"It's something that makes you relentless, makes you drive all day out there at practice, all year on the field and all year off the field because it's more than just the team at-hand," said Kelsay.

"It's for all the Blackshirts that have ever played here."

No one understands that better than Kelsay, whose brother Chad wore a

Blackshirt, or Burrow, whose father Jimmy wore one in the mid-1970s. "Having my dad be a Blackshirt before makes it all the more special," said Burrow. "I just know about the tradition and how big of a thing it is."

Jimmy Burrow is now in his first season as a Cornhusker graduate assistant.

Earning a Blackshirt was just as meaningful when he played. "He said when guys got their Blackshirts, they would break into tears, and if someone got theirs taken away, they'd be crying and be depressed," Jamie said. "So there has always been a lot of emotion involved with it."

As was the case a year ago, Blackshirts were presented in a ceremony instead of simply distributed before practice or placed in a player's locker, as was the case when Chad Kelsay played.

"I kind of like the way they incorporated that into the whole deal," Chris Kelsay said of the ceremony. "It gives players that haven't gotten one more motivation and shows how important it really is." ■

HOME COOKIN'

The Nebraska men's basketball team will become a familiar sight at the Bob Devaney Sports Center this winter as the Huskers will play 16 home games.

The Huskers will be seen on regional or national television at least six times this season, highlighted by a Feb. 27 game against Kansas on CBS.

Nebraska will face 10 teams who earned NCAA Tournament or NIT berths last season, including seven teams in Big 12 Conference play. In all, Nebraska will play 13 games — out of 27 regular-season contests — against teams from last year's postseason tournaments.

The Huskers open their second season under Coach Barry Collier with home exhibition games against Nebraska-Kearney (Nov. 6) and Sports Tours (Nov. 13), before opening the regular season at home against North Carolina A&T on Nov. 20. The Huskers last faced N.C. A&T during the 1998-99 season, taking a 65-47 victory in Lincoln.

The opener is followed by five more home contests between Nov. 24 and Dec. 8, before the Huskers hit the road for the first time. NU's first road game will be Dec. 12 in Omaha against in-state rival Creighton. The Bluejays defeated Nebraska 62-51 last season in Lincoln.

A home contest against Sam Houston State (Dec. 15) — the first against the Bearcats since 1991 — will come before back-to-back road contests at Minnesota (Dec. 22) and at Pacific (Dec. 29). Nebraska closes the non-conference portion of its season with a game against Savannah State (Jan. 2), which, along with Wofford College (Dec. 2), will be facing the Huskers for the first time.

The Huskers open the Big 12 campaign on the road against Missouri Jan. 5 in an ESPN regional telecast.

Nov. 6 — Nebraska-Kearney (Exhibition), 7:05 p.m.; **13** — Sports Tours (Exhibition), 7:05 p.m.; **20** — North Carolina A&T, 7:05 p.m.; **24** — Winthrop, 7:05 p.m.; **28** — UT-San Antonio, 7:05 p.m.

Dec. 2 — Wofford College, 2:05 p.m.; **5** — Western Illinois Lincoln, Neb., 7:05 p.m.; **8** — Oral Roberts, 2:05 p.m.; **12** — at Creighton, TBA; **15** — Sam Houston State, 2:05 p.m.; **22** — at Minnesota, TBA; **29** — at Pacific, TBA

Jan. 2 — Savannah State, 8:05 p.m.; **5** — at Missouri, 12:45 p.m.; **9** — at Kansas, TBA; **12** — Colorado, TBA; **16** — Oklahoma, 7:05 p.m.; **19** — at Texas, 3 p.m.; **23** — at Oklahoma State, TBA; **26** — Iowa State, 8 p.m.; **30** — Texas Tech, 7:05 p.m.

Feb. 5 — at Colorado, TBA; **9** — Kansas State, 12:45 p.m.; **13** — Missouri, 7:05 p.m.; **16** — at Iowa State, 12:45 p.m.; **20** — at Texas A&M, TBA; **24** — Kansas, 3 p.m.; **27** — Baylor, 7:05 p.m.

March 2 — at Kansas State, TBA; **7-10** — at Big 12 Tournament Kansas City, Mo.

All times Central Standard and subject to change. ■

QUICK HITS

What's Happening In Nebraska Athletics?

ON THE RECEIVING END

Nebraska recruited Mike Stuntz as a quarterback, and the freshman from Council Bluffs will still have an opportunity to establish himself at that position. But for now, he's playing split end.

A week into pre-season practice, Stuntz agreed to a move to wide receiver, a position at which the Cornhuskers are trying to develop depth. At the time of the move, the health of senior wingback John Gibson, who underwent knee surgery following the Alamo Bowl, also was a concern.

The 6-foot-2, 185-pound Stuntz was a wide receiver as a sophomore at Council Bluffs St. Albert High School, but played quarterback on offense as a junior and senior.

He played defensive back on defense and also returned kicks.

"Mike has demonstrated an ability to do a great job catching the ball and running patterns," Coach Frank Solich said in announcing the position switch. "He has good speed and elusiveness."

Those skills also would serve him well as a quarterback, and he'll be given that opportunity in spring practice. "Certainly next spring he'll be at quarterback again," said Solich.

Stuntz is following the same route that former Cornhusker Bobby Newcombe followed when he arrived in 1997. Newcombe played wingback as a true freshman then returned to quarterback to compete with Eric Crouch for the starting job. Newcombe eventually ended up at wingback.

Mike McLaughlin, the Cornhuskers' other quarterback in this year's scholarship recruiting class, was given an opportunity to move to wide receiver temporarily but opted to remain at quarterback. It appears McLaughlin, who followed Crouch at Millard North High, will redshirt.

BRIEFLY NOTED

— Suspending a player is difficult, anyway, but there was a personal component to Coach Frank Solich's suspension of junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick for the opener against TCU. Solich was in Diedrick's home in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada the night before Tom Osborne announced he was stepping aside.

Solich told Diedrick that night he would be Osborne's successor. "I was concerned because I didn't know for sure how Dahrran would react with Coach Osborne not being the head coach at Nebraska anymore," Solich recalled. "So I felt like I needed to tell him that. Dahrran smiled at me and said, 'Coach, I think that's great. I feel like I've got a little bit of an in with the head coach.'"

— Nebraska's emphasis on completing degrees extends to former as well as current players. In addition to current Huskers Demoiné Adams, Jamie Burrow, Erwin Swiney and Dave Volk, former players Josh Anderson (1997-99), Rod Baker (1999-2000), Reggie Baul (1993-95), Clint Finley (1997-2000), Dwayne McClary (1999-2000) and Jake McKee (1998-2000) also received degrees in mid-August.

— Former Cornhusker I-back Dan Alexander, a sixth-round draft pick of the NFL's Tennessee Titans, was named as a recipient of a Big 12 "Sportsperson of the Year Award" in late July. The award is based on academics and commitment to sportsmanship and community service.

OTHER SPORTS

— The Husker volleyball team received an oral commitment from Dani Busboom, a 5-foot-10 middle hitter from Freeman (Neb.) High School in early August. Busboom, a junior, is believed to be the earliest scholarship commitment ever for the volleyball team.

Busboom's coach at Freeman is former Husker Gwen Egbert.

— Brad Nelson, a power-hitting third baseman from Algona, Iowa, was among the Nebraska baseball team's prize recruits. But he won't be playing for the Cornhuskers after signing a multi-year contract with the Milwaukee Brewers in late July. He was the 141st pick overall in the draft's fourth round.

"I was all ready to play college ball at Nebraska," Nelson told the Omaha World-Herald. "I was close to making that choice." But the Brewers "came through for me."

— Pablo Morales, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was hired as head coach of the Nebraska women's swimming and diving team in late July. The men's program was discontinued in March. ■



Mike Stuntz

Giving Back

Rush end Adams says his parents deserve the credit for his amazing academic achievements



Mike BABCOCK

THOSE OF US who spent more than four years completing an undergraduate degree in college have a special appreciation for what Demoiné Adams has accomplished.

Nebraska's junior rush end earned a bachelor's degree in three years, majoring in political science, with minors in English, history, communications, ethnic studies and African studies. That's five minors. Count 'em, five. His education is well

rounded. And the thing is, he isn't finished.

This semester he's taking nine hours toward a master's degree in psychology. And eventually, he plans to go to law school. He hasn't taken the Law Schools Admission Test yet, however, and if that doesn't work out for some reason, he'll probably pursue a doctorate in psychology.

But those are future decisions. First things first. He's serious about football, too. "I've got to take one thing at a time and focus on the national championship this year," he said.

To that end, he wears a Blackshirt, the football equivalent of a three-year degree.

Adams has broken the dumb-football-player stereotype in dramatic fashion, shattered it really, by becoming what is believed to be just the second Cornhusker to complete an undergraduate degree in three years. Bobby Newcombe was the first, playing last season as a graduate student.

What makes Adams' accomplishment even more remarkable — if that's possible — is that he passed only nine credit hours during his first semester as a freshman three years ago.

It wasn't until then that he committed himself in the classroom. "Something inside told me I needed to stop playing around with the mental part of school," he said. "I was working hard with the physical part of it, and I decided it was time to do something with the mental part, too."

Dennis Lablanc, an associate athletic director for academic programs and student services, suggested he could graduate in three years, Adams said, and "it was like a challenge to me."

He accepted the challenge, with extraordinary inner strength, fueled by a strong spirituality and shaped by the will to make his family proud. His parents came to Lincoln for graduation in mid-August. And "one of the things I'm most excited about is just to see them happy," he said.

He wanted "to make them feel like they raised a good child. That's one thing every kid should do, give back and make their parents proud instead of just thinking of themselves."

The evidence indicates that Adams was raised right. He's

polite and respectful, regularly responding to male reporters with "yes sir." And he's self-effacing to the point of being among the most difficult interviews on the team. He avoids attention the way he does would-be blockers.

He often averted his gaze as he talked about graduating in three years. Given the opportunity, it was obvious that he would have avoided discussing the subject altogether.

"I just know I didn't do it all by myself," he said. "That's why I really can't brag about it and go around telling everybody, because I didn't do it by myself. I can't take all of the credit. If there is someone to be proud, it would have to be my parents. I'd have to give it all to my parents."

The paintings of Nebraska's academic All-Americans in all sports — men's and women's — that hang on the walls just outside the dining area in the Hewitt Center have inspired him.

By his estimation, he was a "decent" high school student in Pine Bluff, Ark. "But things were easy for me," he said. "It wasn't until I got my eyes opened after that first semester (at Nebraska)."

Then "I stopped taking education for granted because there are a lot of people out there who would do anything just to be in college, let alone getting a chance to play football," he said.

Adams is a two-time, first-team Academic All-Big 12 honoree. And he has been nominated for Academic All-America honors twice. He is a two-year member of the team's Unity Council, and his community involvement has included volunteering as an elementary-school mentor. "Not only do I want to be a leader on this football team, I want to be a leader of other people," he said.

He hasn't had time to reflect on his academic achievement, not only because of the demands of football but also because there haven't been any "guarantees," he said.

"I had my ups and downs. All my classes weren't A's and B's."

One of the down times was during first semester a year ago, when he had to drop two classes "because times were getting hard, and the road was dark at the end. I didn't think I could do it," he said. "But, I guess, it got to the point where I spent a lot of time by myself, and something in my heart told me, 'You're not doing this alone.' It was a goal I had set, and I worked too hard to just give up."

During the difficult times, "my faith stayed strong," he said.

And that's how he finished a degree in three years. ■



Demoiné Adams is a two-time Academic All-Big 12 honoree.

Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 20 years. Mike can be reached at mdb@inetnebr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.



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Giant Step

Senior-to-be Spiehs can't say no to San Francisco's late-summer offer



Terry DOUGLASS

AS THE SUMMER BEGAN winding down, it started to become evident that Nebraska's R.D. Spiehs was going to have a big decision to make. The fact that the Cornhusker pitcher was in the win-win situation of being able to pick and choose which dream to chase didn't make it any easier.

However, after a solid season with the Anchorage Glacier Pilots in the Alaskan Summer League, the San Francisco Giants finally made Spiehs an offer he couldn't refuse. And so, with a few pen strokes on a professional contract, the Nebraska's baseball team has lost one of its most effective and versatile pitchers from the past three seasons.

Spiehs says he'll never forget being a part of Nebraska's first team to ever qualify for the College World Series. Although he'd like to help the Huskers make another run for Omaha next season, Spiehs said his desire to "give it a go" in the professional ranks was simply too strong.

"Growing up, I think you have two dreams in baseball," Spiehs said. "One is to go to the College World Series, and the other is to play professional ball. The CWS was great. I have that now, and nobody can take the experience away from me, but this is something that's hard to walk away from."

"Money aside, you can't buy the opportunity to play professional baseball."

By joining the Giants organization, Spiehs became the fourth Husker to leave school early and sign a pro contract following the CWS. He joined outfielders Adam Stern (Atlanta Braves) and John Cole (Seattle Mariners) and pitcher Thom Ott (Los Angeles Dodgers). All-America pitcher Shane Komine, who was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals, announced earlier that he would return for his senior season.

For most of the summer, the money wasn't right for Spiehs to leave. The 33rd-round draft pick by the Giants in the June major league baseball amateur draft had turned down at least two offers and planned to return to Nebraska for his senior season. However, Spiehs' performances at Anchorage started turning some heads.

After initially being disappointed by not signing immediately after the CWS, it turned out that the trip north may have given Spiehs additional bargaining power. He was 4-2 in 10 starts for Anchorage, striking out 65 in 65 innings. The 6-foot-3 solidly built right-hander capped his summer by allowing just one run over 15 innings and two starts in the National Baseball Congress World Series in Wichita, Kan.

Possibly more impressive than his statistics, Spiehs added significant velocity to his fastball during the summer, hitting 93 mph on the radar gun during his first NBC series start. Spiehs said he averaged throwing his fastball 87-88 mph during his junior season at Nebraska last spring.

"I really don't know where I found the extra velocity," said Spiehs, who at one point pitched 18 consecutive scoreless innings for the Glacier Pilots. "I guess it was just there

laying on the ground or something. I can't really explain it."

Spiehs did say that he thought pitching in the starting rotation and working more innings per outing probably helped his velocity and stamina. He was a spot starter and long reliever for most of his college career.

The Giants and Spiehs eventually agreed to a contract following the NBC World Series. Although he declined to comment on the exact terms of the deal, Spiehs' father Randy — a former catcher at Nebraska — said the contract was "comparable to eighth-round money," with performance incentives included. In most cases, that figure would be in the neighborhood of \$60,000 to \$70,000.

With that kind of money on the table, NU pitching coach Rob Childress said he couldn't blame Spiehs for leaving.

"On one hand, we're extremely happy for R.D., but on the other hand, we're disappointed that we're not going to have him back," Childress said. "R.D. was always extremely up front with us during the whole process, and in mid-July, he told us that he thought he was coming back. But then he started pitching extremely well, and they basically offered him a package he couldn't turn down."

"I know that R.D. does feel bad about leaving on short notice, but by the same token, the package they offered him on Aug. 20 is something that wouldn't be there for him after his senior year, no matter what kind of year he might've had."

Spiehs' next step is to report to San Francisco's six-week instructional league in September at Scottsdale, Ariz. He will then go to spring training in February and said he has been promised that he'll be assigned to the Giants' high-level Class A affiliate in San Jose, Calif.

In his three seasons at Nebraska, Spiehs gained a reputation as a clutch performer. He owned a 7-1 record in the postseason and ranked fifth all-time among NU's leaders in pitching victories with a 21-6 career mark.

Spiehs entered Nebraska's first-ever trip to the College World Series in Omaha with an 8-3 record and a 4.86 ERA, striking out 75 and walking 19 in 74 innings last season. He started the Huskers' second CWS game and left after five innings with a 3-2 lead, before Tulane rallied for a 6-5 win.

Childress said that it's Spiehs' experience pitching in big games that the Huskers will miss the most.

"We just don't have anyone with the mental toughness that's been through the wars like R.D. has," Childress said. "You just can't replace him with a great arm. His experience and leadership was very important to this team."

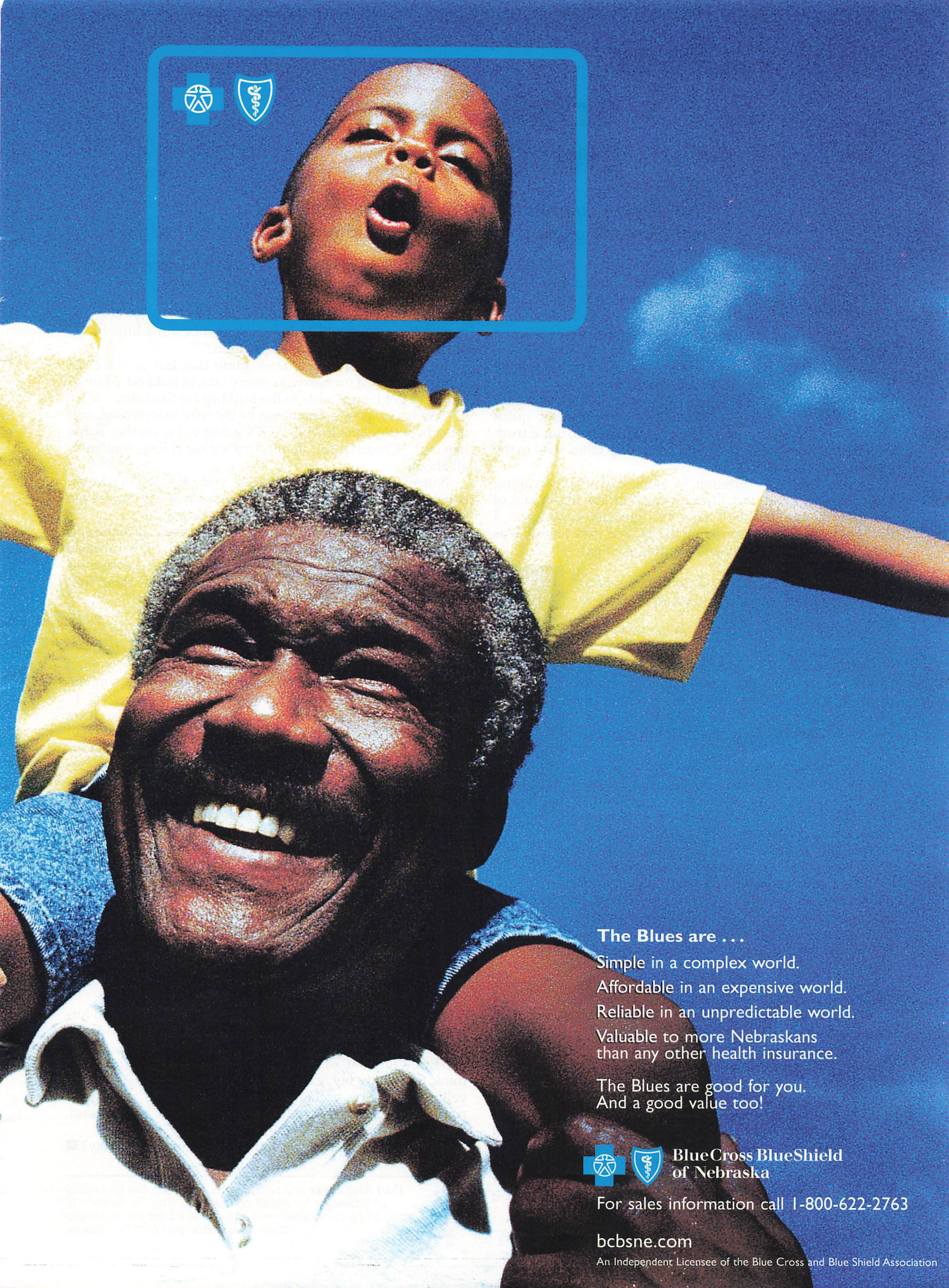
Although he's excited to get his professional career rolling, Spiehs said it wasn't an easy decision to leave his Husker teammates.

"It's tough because Nebraska is a good place with good coaches, and they have real good team chemistry there," said Spiehs, who was one of the team's captains last spring. "That success is something that's hard to walk away from, but this is a step I feel I need to take." ■



R.D. Spiehs had a 21-6 record in three seasons at Nebraska.

Terry Douglass is the sports editor of the *Grand Island Independent*. He can be reached at tdbbdouglass@netzero.net.



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Irish Eyes On Crouch

The Husker quarterback scored three touchdowns, including the game winner, last year in South Bend



Curt McKEEVER

IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THIS, Eric Crouch's first visit to Notre Dame Stadium came last September when then Cornhuskers conducted their pre-game walk-through.

Hard to believe the Irish actually wanted Crouch on their sideline.

Guess no one should be surprised that he really didn't consider doing so.

Notre Dame may have thought it had a chance at the snaring the cheetah-quick quarterback from Millard North, but if truth be told, the Irish finished behind runner-up Ohio State in the hunt for his talents.

"It was just a little different," Crouch said of his recruiting visit to South Bend, Ind. "I don't want to talk about any of the people, but I didn't have the greatest experience. I thought I was there to see some things, and they knew I was there on a recruiting trip, and I didn't even get to see the stadium.

"It was like, 'You know, I don't know how much they really care,' but (that) kind of blew it."

After last year's game, a lot of Irish fans would concur.

Remember Crouch taking that belly option to his left for a 7-yard, game-winning touchdown in overtime? Remember the pass he completed to tight end Tracey Wistrom on third-and-9 just before his third touchdown of the day.

"I've got a Notre Dame fan who went to Millard North, and he's so mad," Crouch said. "He comes up to me once in a while, 'Notre Dame blew it! I can't believe it!' He's all mad. He wants to go back and chew people out."

Imagine if Crouch has a similar kind of game when the Irish come to Lincoln this week.

A year ago, he gained 80 yards rushing on 16 carries and added 103 yards through the air. But there's no comparing the way Crouch was throwing then to how he's looked early in 2001. That offseason shoulder surgery and work over the summer have made Crouch even more dangerous.

"I know my arm's back," said Crouch after a 10-for-18, 151-yard performance in the opener against TCU.

Coincidentally, he became NU's career yardage leader on a pass completion to Wistrom.

"Over the summer, I really worked on that quite a bit," Crouch said of his throwing mechanics. "At the beginning of the summer, I was kind of lifting up my back leg and dragging it trying to (help) my arm. That was just a weak shoulder. That's kind of what I did last season.

"Last year, I was a little tentative to throw a long ball. I knew I was going to feel something after I threw it. This year, I wasn't even thinking about my shoulder, and I think that makes a big difference. I feel like I'm going to get stronger with my arm as the year goes on, whereas last year, I think it got weaker."

But back to Notre Dame.

While Nebraska will be playing its third game of the season, the Irish season is just beginning.

As if this contest needed any hype.

"Notre Dame has been a program that's always been up there," Crouch said. "Obviously, they stick out a little bit on the schedule, but I'd never circle them."

Maybe not, but he'll at least admit that last year's 27-24 result, witnessed by nearly as many fans in red and white as blue and gold, only adds to the buildup for Saturday.

"We had a close game down to the wire in overtime, and it leads both teams to believe it's going to be another battle like that," Crouch said. "To me, that's what college football is all about."

Notre Dame senior defensive end Bryan Dierckman believes the traditions of both programs make it impossible to treat the game as just another on the schedule.

"It's really been the focus of our whole team since the end of last year," Dierckman said of Saturday's matchup. "And with Nebraska, I'm sure their main goal is Notre Dame when they first looked at the schedule."

Last year's game marked the first time since 1948 the Irish and Big Red played in the regular season. Thanks largely to Crouch's efforts — which had one Notre Dame supporter so mad he spit in his direction after a touchdown run — NU pulled even in the all-time series, 7-7-1.

"I didn't know about that until I saw it on TV," Crouch said of the unruly fan. "But what sticks out is the atmosphere, the amount of fans we had in the place, the touchdown in overtime."

"That was probably one of the greatest feelings I've had as a quarterback here at Nebraska, going into South Bend and playing in front of the Notre Dame fans, and mostly our fans, and having a great game like that and having the winning touchdown. It was pretty

overwhelming in a lot of ways."

Although Nebraska dominated the line of scrimmage and had nearly twice as many first downs as the Irish, Notre Dame nearly pulled off a huge comeback by returning a punt and kickoff for touchdowns to force overtime. Coach Bob Davie's team then went in front on a field goal, before Crouch took the field for the final time.

"Eric was completely focused in the huddle," recalled former NU I-back Dan Alexander. "I don't think he had any doubt in his mind we were going to score."

"Eric's just one of those guys who exudes confidence. I think that really helped out the rest of the team. He wasn't yelling, 'You guys gotta block!' or 'You running backs gotta run harder!' He knew we were going to score. We just said, 'You know, we have to follow his lead.'"

Do you think that might be the case again on Saturday? ■



Eric Crouch rushed for 80 yards and passed for 103 in last year's meeting.

Curt McKeever is a sportswriter, covering the University of Nebraska for the Lincoln Journal Star. In addition to reporting on football he is the primary beat writer for the men's basketball and baseball teams.

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Changing



Senior cornerback Erwin Swiney has battled injury problems since starting nine games as a true freshman on Nebraska's 1997 national championship team.

Swiney was in the right place at the right time as true freshman on '97 championship team

By Mike Babcock

Nebraska was clinging to a 27-24 lead against Colorado at Boulder in 1997, with time running out. The upset-minded Buffaloes faced fourth-down-and-25 at their own 21-yard line.

Quarterback John Hessler, who had rallied his team to 14-unanswered, fourth-quarter points, provided Colorado with a final glimmer of hope when he passed to Phil Savoy.

As the Buffaloes' wide receiver tried in desperation to reach the first-down marker, he was hit by Nebraska cornerback Erwin Swiney and knocked out-of-bounds.

Savoy was 3 yards short. Only 12 seconds remained.

If Swiney had missed, "they keep going and maybe have a chance to win," Cornhusker secondary coach George Darlington said of the play. "I think he was a key factor that year."

Darlington offered Swiney's play against Savoy as an example. "Had we not had him, and playing the way he did, we might not have won the national championship," said Darlington.

Swiney was a true freshman in 1997, one of six who contributed to the national title in Tom Osborne's final season as coach. The others were Joe Walker, Kyle Vanden Bosch, Correll Buckhalter, Bobby Newcombe and Matt Davison. "It was a good (recruiting) class," Swiney said.

And 10 members remain, as fifth-year seniors like Swiney. The difference is, the others sat out the 1997 season as redshirts, while Swiney not only played but started from the fourth game on.

Swiney was in the right place at the right time — left cornerback. "He just was out-performing some corners that had a little more experience than he did, quite frankly," Darlington said. "We had some players (cornerbacks) in the system, but they weren't performing at a level to win."

So Swiney stepped into the lineup against Kansas State and didn't relinquish the starting job until he was sidelined for the entire 1999 season while recov-

Scott Babin

g Times

ering from abdominal surgery.

Jerome Peterson, a sophomore, started the first three games at left cornerback in 1997. A pulled hamstring hampered him, however, creating the opportunity on which Swiney capitalized.

"Had we known Jerome Peterson was going to have a hamstring problem about six weeks ago, we would have been in a panic," Osborne told reporters after the Kansas State game.

But there was no panic because during those six weeks, which included two-a-day practices, Swiney had shown he could handle the pressure, athletically and emotionally.

Though he sees the potential for pressure now, as he looks back, "at the time, I was just so focused on what I was doing, I didn't let that stuff come into play," said Swiney. "I didn't even think about it really, how fast it was happening, how quick it was. You take it as it comes.

"I sort of felt a little pressure. I can't say I didn't. It was there. But by the same token, that (playing) was what I was trying to do. So the pressure didn't seem like pressure, to some extent."

To some extent, Swiney had already dealt with more significant pressure in getting to Nebraska. He moved to Lincoln from Dallas in the second semester of his sophomore year in high school, at the insistence of his mom, who wanted to get him headed in a different direction.

He quit the football team at Skyline High School because he couldn't get along with the coach, and he gave up track, even though he had shown exceptional ability as a sprinter. Had he remained in Dallas, he would have done nothing but get into a "heap of trouble," he has said.

"I probably wouldn't have made it this far if I had stayed," he said.

Even after he left, he was determined to return. He enrolled at Northeast High in Lincoln intending graduate, if that's what it was going to take, and then get out of town, head back to Dallas.

Though he adjusted to Northeast

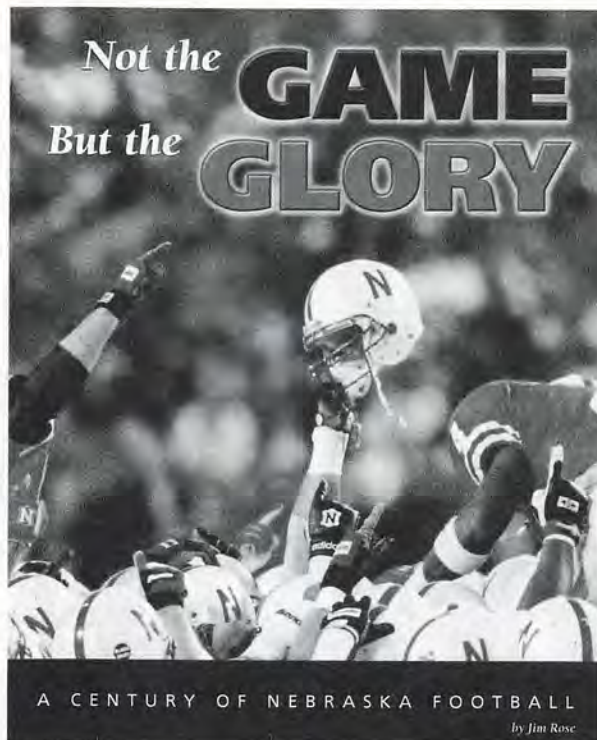
easily enough, he didn't completely amend his plans until his senior year, after he had attended Nebraska's summer camp and was offered a scholarship — which he also took as it came. He played wide receiver at the camp, and impressed the coaches with his speed.

Northeast Coach Mark King didn't

have to persuade him to go out for the football team. All King had to do was suggest it. Swiney, who had run track that first semester, was eager to resume playing football, which he had done in pick-up games near his apartment complex in Dallas.

He also played football in junior high. He was a running back. But

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when he got to high school and had the problem with the coach, he lost interest, falling in with the "wrong crowd."

At Northeast, he was a wingback on offense, and "when I came to camp here, I played receiver pretty well," he said. "I caught some balls. I was pretty good with my hands, catching the ball."

What impressed the Cornhusker coaches, however, was the 40-yard dash he ran in an electronically timed 4.39 seconds at the football camp and his strength; he was a competitive powerlifter.

Swiney didn't hesitate to accept the scholarship. Nebraska was a "clear-cut" choice. "I mean, a kid coming from having nothing, really, not going to any college, to get offered by one of the top schools in the country, I couldn't turn that down," he said. "I had nothing to lose."

By accepting the scholarship, Swiney had committed to remaining in Nebraska for at least four more years. And in doing that, the change in direction his life had taken became irrevocable. He has succeeded not only on the football field but also in the classroom, earning a degree in sociology.

He and three teammates graduated at the end of the summer session. The others are middle linebacker Jamie Burrow, offensive tackle Dave Volk and rush end Demoiné Adams.

Earning the degree was "very important," said Swiney. "That's THE most important thing because, you know, football's not always going to be there for you. So it was one of my top priorities."

"At one point in time, I didn't know if I was going to graduate high school. I was probably going to try to get a GED in Dallas. I've come a long way, to be a college graduate."

Four years is a lifetime in intercollegiate athletics, and Swiney has seen a lot of changes since arriving at Nebraska in the fall of 1997. Osborne has given way to Frank Solich. Charlie McBride has given way to Craig Bohl as defensive coordinator. The Cornhuskers play on FieldTurf at Memorial Stadium, which has undergone a major facelift, in the shadow of skyboxes. And Osborne is a congressman.

"It's safe to say it's different," Swiney said. "But our tradition is strong; you won't see much of a change (in it). I think the program has pretty much, as far as competition,

stayed the same."

Swiney and wingback John Gibson are the only current Cornhuskers who played in 1997, and Gibson played only in the opener against Akron before suffering a season-ending knee injury.

Swiney would have completed his eligibility last season, along with Vanden Bosch, Walker, Newcombe, Buckhalter and Davison, if not for the abdominal injury, which caused him to play in pain throughout his sophomore season. But he has never lamented being hurt.

"It was one of my down years, I could say. But I sort of take the negative and turn it into a positive. I didn't get down on myself. When I knew that I was going to have surgery and I was going to probably be out, I said to myself, 'This is good. God has done this for a reason. This is a test.'"

He passed the test, and now he's hoping to contribute to another national championship run. He knows what it takes. He was in the midst of the action back in 1997.

"That was a pretty outstanding thing," he said. "It's like we were spoiled almost. That's one of the greatest experiences a college football player could have." ■



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Sept. 28	Baylor	7 p.m.
Oct. 5	Missouri	7 p.m.
Oct. 7	Kansas	1 p.m.
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Sept. 25	Creighton	7 p.m.
Sept. 26	Iowa State	7 p.m.
Oct. 3	Missouri	7 p.m.
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Oct. 17	Brigham Young	7 p.m.
Oct. 10	Kansas	7 p.m.
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Little Lannie Grew Up

Hopkins learned to deal out licks, not take them

The way Lannie Hopkins remembers it, the only time he ever "went down" during a high school football game was because of a cramp. "I was laying there, grabbing the back of my leg like it was a hamstring (pull) or something," Nebraska's redshirted freshmen rover said.

His recollection remains vivid because of the way his mom reacted. She came out of the stands and tried to push her way onto the playing field to minister to her stricken son. When he realized the reason for the commotion at a gate that led from the stands to the field, Hopkins' pain turned to embarrassment. "That was horrible," he said with a smile.

Had he been injured that night, his mom could have helped. Dorothy Hopkins is a nurse, an occupation that apparently has heightened her concern for the welfare of her son. During games, "she still sits on the edge of her seat," said Hopkins.

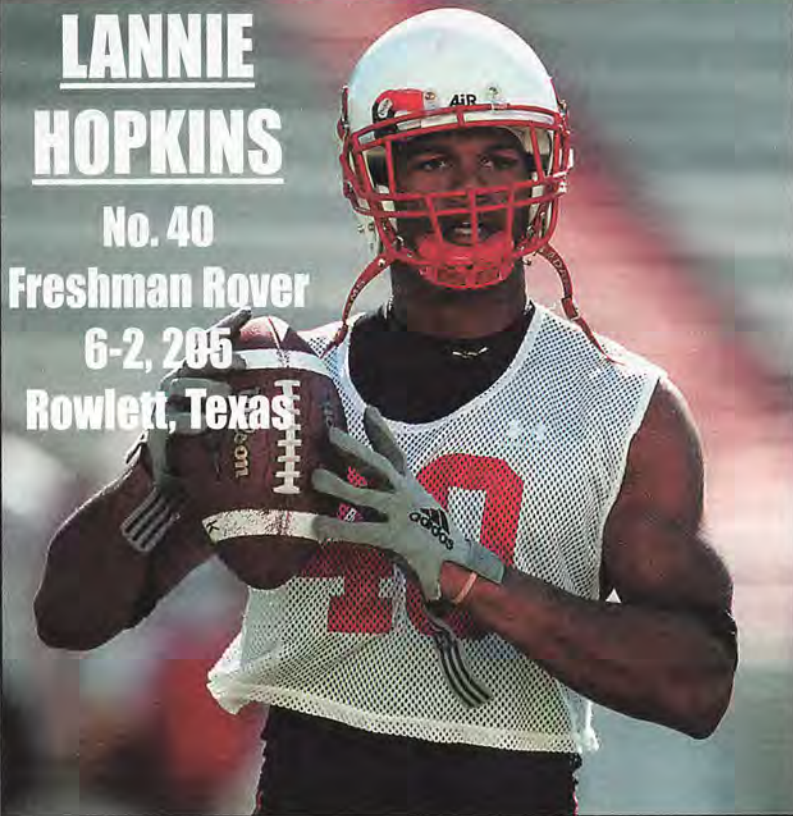
Had it been left up to her, he might never have played football. He didn't join an organized team until he was a freshman at Rowlett High School in suburban Dallas-Fort Worth, in fact. Not that he didn't want to play. But "my mom was scared because I was always real small. I mean, I was always the smallest. My ninth-grade year, oh gosh, I was real small," Hopkins said.

His size, or lack of size, made him an easy target, not just for bullies but for anybody else who was bigger — which included just about everyone it seemed. "I always got punked," he said. "I always got beat up. I was that little nerd who couldn't play, and I got picked on."

Even so, he managed to persuade his mom to let him go out for the football team in ninth grade. His dad, a trucker also named Lannie, never had a problem with football. He played football and basketball in high school and could have played one or the other in college, according to his son.

"He says, 'Just be tough. That doesn't hurt,'" said Hopkins.

**LANNIE
HOPKINS**
No. 40
Freshman Rover
6-2, 205
Rowlett, Texas



With his mom's grudging agreement, he finally tried out for the football team, with about as much apprehension as enthusiasm. "At the time I was scared," he said. "The first time I put on pads, I was very nervous."

Not surprisingly, that first season wasn't particularly distinguished. Hopkins played cornerback, but not very well. He had the speed to play in the secondary, but he was as tentative as he was small. "None of the coaches liked me because I couldn't do anything," he said. "I was all fumbly."

Many youngsters that age get discouraged and quit. But Hopkins refused to take what he considered the easy way out. He was determined to play football, and to play it well.

During workouts in the spring of his freshman year, "I was like, man, I'm tired of everybody putting me down. If you put your heart into it, you can do anything you want to," he said.

Hopkins decided the best way to convince his coaches of that was to be as aggressive as possible. So during practices, the self-described "little

nerd" started dealing out licks instead of taking them. "I was just laying people out," Hopkins said.

He so impressed the coaches with his aggression that he was moved from cornerback to safety for his sophomore season and then to linebacker when he was a junior. The No. 40 jersey he now wears is a constant reminder of his change in attitude in the spring of his freshman year. He wore No. 24 — his dad's number in high school — when he was a freshman. But his coach suggested he switch to No. 40, telling him No. 40 was a "good hitting number." So he's worn it ever since. "It's been doing me good," said Hopkins.

He was recruited as a weakside linebacker, but after sitting out last season as a redshirt, he was moved to rover in the spring and is now in the mix with, among others, senior Dion Booker and true freshman Philip Bland. He has a "world of potential" at either position, according to secondary coach George Darlington.

"He's one of those guys a little bit like Keyuo (Craver) in that Keyuo can

play a lot of places," Darlington said. "Lannie Hopkins can play a lot of places."

At 6-foot-2 and 205 pounds, Hopkins has good size for a rover, a fact over which he marvels. But then, his high school coaches always told him that with his frame he would put on weight.

When he arrived at Nebraska, he was 183 pounds, the weight at which he played as a high school senior. "I was all skinny and stuff," he said. "Now they're saying don't gain too much. Now I've got some meat on my bones, and people back home, they about fall out of their chair (when they see him)."

Recently, he was watching highlight film of himself from high school, and "I was thinking, if I could just play one more game. That's all I wish, one more game in high school," he said.

One more game at his weight now, but "at the same position" he played then. He'd do some damage, that's for sure, and enjoy some payback for always getting punked in the process.

Oh yes, and even though he would be much more mature than those with whom he was playing, his mom would be on the edge of her seat every second. ■

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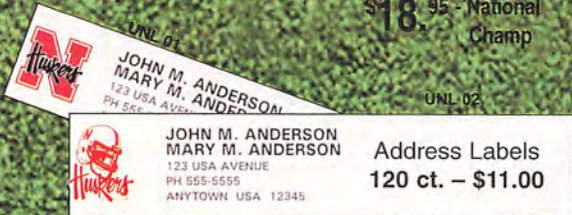
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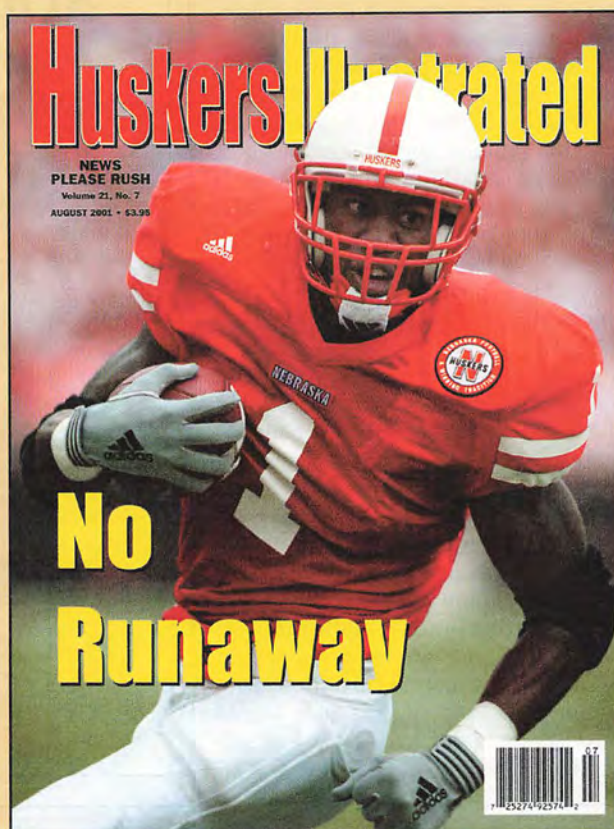
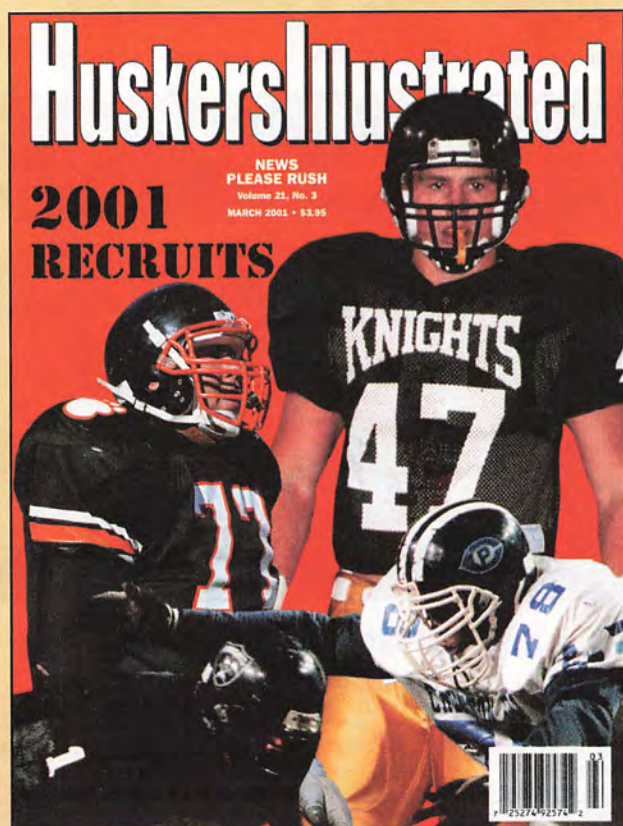
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Nebraska 42

Troy State 14

Nebraska defensive tackle Jeremy Slechta (56) tries to get to Troy State quarterback Brock Nutter (11), as running back Demontray Carter (1) provides protection.

Emotional

Nose tackle's touchdown inspires defense

The opportunity was worth six points. And Jon Clanton made the most of it.

On the second play in the second quarter of Nebraska's 42-14 victory against Troy State, Clanton broke through the line and headed toward quarterback Brock Nutter.

The Cornhuskers' junior nose tackle saw a sack within his grasp. But rover Lannie Hopkins got to Nutter first and as he pulled Nutter down, he knocked the ball free.

Clanton scooped up the ball, with 20 yards of open FieldTurf between him and the end zone. "The first thing I was thinking was, 'Oh God, don't trip on the ground,'" he said.

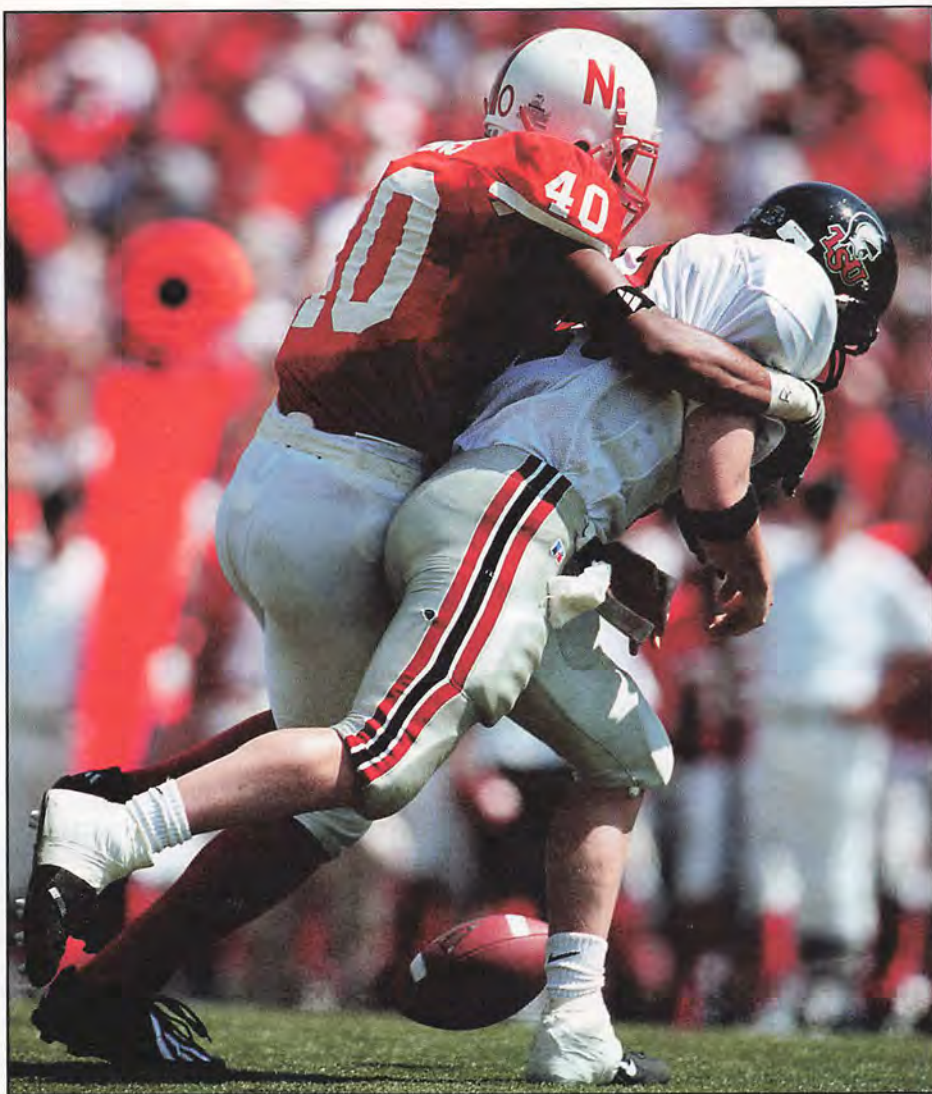
As he neared the goal line, "I thought someone was going to tackle me," he said.

But the player behind him was teammate Casey Nelson.

Clanton's touchdown, Nebraska's first by a defensive tackle since Jason Peter scored one against Virginia Tech in the 1996 Orange Bowl game, produced what would prove to be the winning points. But, more importantly, it "got everybody going," rush end Chris Kelsay said.

The emotional boost was reflected statistically. On the strength of a couple of big pass plays, Troy State had gained a net of 106 yards and scored seven points in the first quarter.

During the final three quarters of their first NCAA Division I-A game, the Trojans gained only 59 yards, with a net of minus-29 rushing. They finished with a rushing net of minus-25,



the fourth-lowest rushing total in Nebraska history. The Cornhuskers had eight sacks for 68 yards in losses.

In the second half, especially, the defense "played with that hard edge we're looking for," said defensive coordinator Craig Bohl. "There seems to be a resolve that no matter what happens out there, we're going to stay in the fight. We're going to continue to finish things off."

The defense got stronger as the game went on, he said. "You've got to play with tremendous intensity and

emotion, and I've not seen our defensive drop off from that standpoint. I feel like we probably have more emotion and intensity than what we had all last year. We're pleased with that."

The victory wasn't as much of a feel-good experience as it might have been, however, as the Cornhuskers turned their attention to a nationally televised game against Notre Dame.

For the second week in a row, the offense was flawed. "I'm not happy about how we played, but I'm not mad," quarterback Eric Crouch said. "We didn't take advantage of opportunities."

If Nebraska had capitalized on its offensive opportunities, the margin of victory very well could have approached an unreasonable spread

**Stories by Mike Babcock
Photos by Scott Bruhn and
Jason Bokowski**

Boost



The Nebraska defense sacked Troy State quarterback Brock Nutter eight times. Rover Lannie Hopkins (40, left) sacked Nutter and knocked the football loose early in the second quarter. It was scooped up by nose tackle Jon Clanton (above, right), who took it 20 yards for a touchdown. Clanton's convoy included Chris Kelsay (57) and Casey Nelson (85).

that had been placed at from 49 to 53 points.

"In this day and age, 53 is rough," Coach Frank Solich said earlier in the week.

But it could have been about right when you consider that the Cornhuskers were inside the Troy State 20-yard line four times — including twice inside the 4 — without scoring. And they missed on another opportunity when a Crouch pass was intercepted on third-and-7 at the Trojan 26.

The offensive frustration was greatest after Nebraska came away with nothing, despite being first-and-goal from the Troy State 5. The final two plays were inside the 1-yard line.

Thunder Collins came up short on

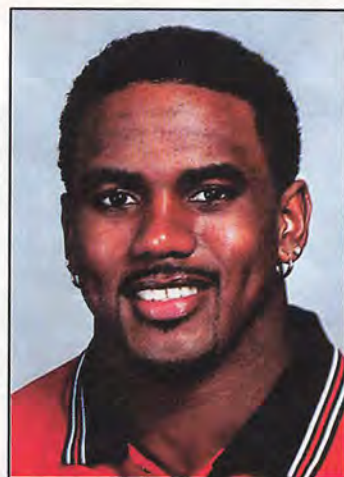
third down. And Crouch, who missed two days of practice during the week with flu-like symptoms, was stopped short on fourth.

"I'm guilty of not getting the ball in the end zone," he said.

He did get the ball in the end zone in a similar situation in the third quarter, to give the Cornhuskers a lead they never relinquished. But that touchdown required three plays from just 1 yard out. "When you get them (opportunities), you've got to do something with them," said Solich.

Dahrran Diedrick did plenty with his opportunities in his first career start, after sitting out the opener because of a one-game suspension. He rushed for 177 yards and three touchdowns on 22 carries.

Husker Player of the Game



Dahrran Diedrick

Something to Prove

Obviously, Coach Frank Solich expects big things from junior I-back Dahrran Diedrick.

"I thought he played fairly well," Solich said after Nebraska's 42-14 victory against Troy State.

Fairly well? Diedrick rushed for 177 yards and three touchdowns on 22 carries.

"It did not look to me like maybe Dahrran had all his quickness and speed," said Solich. "But Dahrran certainly ran hard. He got a couple of chances for some big runs. And he produced some big plays. So for his first start, I was pleased with his performance . . . I thought he responded well."

Diedrick carried on the first six plays from scrimmage, as Nebraska tried to establish its power game, an element that was missing from the offense in a 21-7, opening-game victory against TCU.

Diedrick, who had to sit out a one-game suspension, said he had something to prove.

"I think every time you go out there, you have to try to prove something to your teammates," he said. "You have to keep their confidence because they have to trust you when you get the ball in your hands." ■



The Nebraska offense had its moments against Troy State. I-back Dahrran Diedrick (above) pulls away from the pack on his 33-yard touchdown run in the third quarter. He finished with 177 yards. Split end Wilson Thomas (right), battling Troy State cornerback Deiric Jackson (27) for the football, had another fine game with six catches for 83 yards.

The junior I-back admitted he was nervous prior to his first carry, which came on the Cornhuskers' first play from scrimmage. "I didn't think I would be, but I was," he said.

He carried five more times before Crouch finally did.

"The coaches made it clear that's the kind of workload I'm going to get," said Diedrick, who was emotional when he heard his name announced on the P.A. system before the game.

Being a starter for the first time was more exciting "than any touchdown," he said, adding that when he looked up at a HuskerVision screen, "I was feeling really good about myself."

Collins, who replaced Diedrick in the starting lineup against TCU, carried 11 times for 52 yards and scored the game's final touchdown on a 7-run run with 6:54 remaining. By then, any suspense there might have been because Troy State had scored first in the game

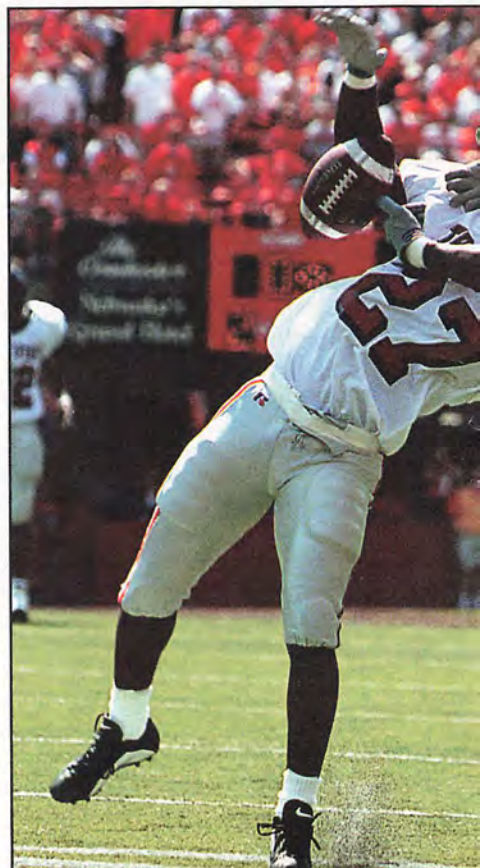
had long since faded.

Nebraska had taken the lead only minutes before Clanton scored, however, making his touchdown more meaningful. As he reached the back of the end zone, Nelson tackled him.

Teammates piled on the 6-foot-2, 280-pound Clanton in celebration, preventing any demonstrations that might have drawn an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty like the one Diedrick got for a high step at the goal line to finish off his 33-yard touchdown run in the third quarter.

"It was foolish to do, but I didn't think they'd call it," Diedrick said.

Clanton is an emotional player, according to Kelsay, but even if he had been so inclined, he couldn't have expressed himself very well at the bottom of the pile. "When you've got guys piling on top of you, you've got to catch your wind before you suffocate," said Kelsay. ■





4TH & 1 INCHES

Notes And Quotes From The Troy State Game

YOUNG HUSKERS TOP TACKLERS

Unofficially, Nebraska's leading tacklers all were young players. True freshman middle linebacker Barrett Ruud was credited with 10 tackles, including five unassisted, while sophomore weakside linebacker T.J. Hollowell, who missed the opener with an ankle injury, was credited with eight.

Freshman rover Philip Bland and redshirted freshman cornerback Lornell McPherson were credited with five tackles each. McPherson also had one of the Cornhuskers' eight sacks.

"Young guys are making some plays," said Coach Frank Solich. "That was the idea behind taking the extra game, with the hopes that these young players would keep improving."

Ruud, senior Jamie Burrow's back-up in the middle, had to adjust to Troy State's no-huddle offense. "When I first came in, I messed up a couple of times mentally because it was so fast-paced," he said. "You had to make your decisions in a split second. As the game went on, I got the hang of it."

Hollowell got in sooner than he expected when starter Mark Vedral went to the sideline with a shoulder stinger.

MORE BOOMING PUNTS

Sophomore punter Kyle Larson's debut against TCU was impressive. But he was even more impressive against Troy State, averaging 49.5 yards. He punted only twice, however.

NEGATIVE RUSHING YARDAGE

Troy State finished with a net of minus-25 yards rushing, the fourth-lowest total in Cornhusker history. Kansas State finished with a net of minus-45 yards rushing against Nebraska in 1976. Kansas had minus-42 yards in 1971. And Oregon State had minus-36 yards in 1989.

Louisiana Tech was the last opponent to finish with minus rushing yardage (21) in 1998.

THOMAS CATCHING ON

Going into this season, junior split end Wilson Thomas had one career pass reception. He caught five passes for 83 yards, including a career-long 36 yarder, against Troy State.

Thomas caught three passes in the opener against Texas Christian.

CRAVER GETS SECOND CHANCE

Keyuo Craver made the most of a second chance returning punts against the Trojans. After fumbling his first, he came back to return three more. His total yardage for the four returns was 48.

"First, I have to catch the ball," he said. "I know I can do things once I have it in my hand. I'm sure the coaches are really going to be on me this week. But I'm looking forward to it."

CREATING TURNOVERS

Creating turnovers has been one of the areas of emphasis for Nebraska's defense. Vedral and free safety Willie Amos intercepted passes, and nose tackle Jon Clanton returned a fumble, forced by rover Lannie Hopkins, for the Cornhuskers' third touchdown early in the second quarter.

Nose tackle Jason Lohr, who was credited with two of Nebraska's eight sacks, pressured quarterback Brock Nutter on the interception by Amos. Cornerback DeJuan Groce also had a hand in the play.

PRIDE, PAYDAY

Troy State earned \$475,000 to play its first game as a member of NCAA Division I-A at Memorial Stadium. "We certainly don't have anything to be ashamed of, I don't think," said Trojan Coach Larry Blakeney. "We exhibited the pride of our program."

Blakeney was effusive in his praise of Nebraska, calling it "probably the best program in the world over the last 25 to 30 years, if you average everything out and consider everything. Certainly, they looked the part, and all of this around here looks the part. It's big time all the way," he said.

"I was doing pretty good until I saw them in warm-ups, and then I almost hyperventilated. I was on the brown bag because they (the Cornhuskers) are so big and awesome, looking down there and all that red. Our little guys on our end didn't look quite that big. So I was concerned."

Blakeney maintained his sense of humor despite the loss, introducing himself thus. "My name is Larry Blakeney. I coach football, sometimes better than other times." ■

2001 Schedule

(Team's current record)

1	Aug. 25	TCU (1-1), W 21-7
2	Sept. 1	Troy State (0-1), W 42-14
3	Sept. 8	Notre Dame (0-0), 7 p.m., ABC
4	Sept. 15	Rice (1-0), 6 p.m., FSN
5	Sept. 29	@ Missouri (0-1), TBA
6	Oct. 6	Iowa State (0-0), TBA
7	Oct. 13	@ Baylor (0-0), 1 p.m.
8	Oct. 20	Texas Tech (0-0), Homecoming, TBA
9	Oct. 27	Oklahoma (2-0), TBA
10	Nov. 3	@ Kansas (1-0), TBA
11	Nov. 10	Kansas State (0-0), TBA
12	Nov. 23	@ Colorado (1-1), 2:30 p.m., ABC
	Dec. 1	Big 12 Championship at Irving, Texas, 7 p.m., ABC

Upcoming Opponents' Schedules

Notre Dame (0-0)	
Sept. 8	at Nebraska
Sept. 15	at Purdue
Sept. 22	Michigan State
Sept. 29	at Texas A&M
Oct. 6	Pittsburgh
Oct. 13	West Virginia
Oct. 20	USC
Oct. 27	at Boston College
Nov. 3	Tennessee
Nov. 17	Navy
Nov. 24	at Stanford

Rice (1-0)	
Sept. 1	at Houston, W 21-14
Sept. 8	Duke
Sept. 15	at Nebraska
Sept. 29	at Hawaii
Oct. 6	Boise State
Oct. 13	at Navy
Oct. 20	Nevada
Oct. 27	at Louisiana Tech
Nov. 3	at Fresno State
Nov. 10	Tulsa
Nov. 17	Texas-El Paso
Nov. 24	at Southern Methodist

Big 12 at a Glance

Sunday, Aug. 26
Fresno State 24, Colorado 22

Saturday, Sept. 1
Nebraska 42, Troy State 14
Colorado 41, Colorado State 14
Bowling Green 20, Missouri 13

Kansas 24, Southwest Missouri 10
Oklahoma 44, Air Force 3
So. Mississippi 17, Oklahoma State 9
Texas 41, New Mexico State 7
Texas A&M 38, McNeese State 24
Baylor, Iowa State, Kansas State, Texas
Tech idle

Game 3

Notre Dame Sept. 8

Location: Notre Dame,
Ind.

Enrollment: 10,301

2000 record: 9-3

Coach: Bob Davie, fifth year

Series: Tied 7-7-1



7 p.m. (ABC)

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln

Irish player to Watch

Junior tailback Julius Jones was Notre Dame's leading rusher in 2000 and with 657 yards and seven touchdowns and is a dangerous kick returner.



Jones, who has been slowed by an assortment of injuries during the pre-season, made his first career start against Nebraska and responded with 227 all-purpose yards, including a 100-yard kickoff return to bring the Irish to within seven at 21-14.

Quick Facts

Senior Arnaz Battle, who started at quarterback last year against Nebraska and played the entire game despite suffering a broken wrist that sidelined him for the rest of the season, has moved to flanker.

The starting quarterback is sophomore Matt LoVecchio, who began last season at No. 3 but assumed the starting role after the injury to Battle. LoVecchio started the last eight games and led the Irish to seven straight wins to end the regular season. He completed 73 of 125 passes for 980 yards and 11 touchdowns and rushed for 300 yards and two scores.

Nebraska has won the last two meetings, including the 27-24 overtime thriller last year in South Bend.

On Deck

Rice Sept. 15

Location: Houston, Texas

Enrollment: 4,320

2000 record: 308

Coach: Ken Hatfield,
eighth year

Series: First meeting

6 p.m. (Fox Sports Net)

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.



Tentative 2 Deeps

NEBRASKA OFFENSE

SE	9	Wilson Thomas**	6-6	215	Jr.
	9	Ben Zajicek	6-0	210	Fr.
LT	58	Dave Volk***	6-5	300	Sr.
	75	Kyle Kollmorgen***	6-5	310	Sr.
LG	77	Toni Fonoti**	6-4	340	Jr.
	74	Steve Altstadt*	6-5	295	Sr.
C	52	John Garrison**	6-4	285	Jr.
	53	Matt Shook*	6-2	300	Jr.
RG	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
	59	Wes Cody*	6-2	295	Jr.
RT	68	Dan Waldrop*	6-5	330	So.
	66	Jon Rutherford***	6-3	300	Sr.
TE	87	Tracey Wistrom***	6-5	240	Sr.
	99	Aaron Golliday**	6-4	285	Jr.
QB	7	Eric Crouch***	6-1	200	Sr.
	10	Jammal Lord*	6-2	215	So.
FB	4	Judd Davies*	6-0	240	So.
	45	Steve Kriewald	5-10	255	Fr.
IB	30	Dahrran Diedrick**	6-0	225	Jr.
	1	Thunder Collins*	6-2	190	Jr.
WB	8	John Gibson***	6-0	195	Sr.
	89	Troy Hassebroek**	6-4	220	Jr.
PK	22	Sandro DeAngelis	5-8	195	Fr.

NEBRASKA DEFENSE

LR	57	Chris Kelsay**	6-5	270	Jr.
	92	Justin Smith**	6-4	260	Jr.
NT	70	Jason Lohr***	6-2	275	Sr.
	55	Jon Clanton**	6-2	280	Jr.
DT	56	Jeremy Slichta***	6-6	285	Sr.
	85	Casey Nelson**	6-2	285	Sr.
RR	98	Demoine Adams**	6-2	235	Jr.
	95	J.P. Wichmann**	6-4	230	Sr.
SLB	43	Scott Shanley**	6-2	235	Jr.
	47	Ira Cooper	6-2	220	Fr.
MLB	48	Jamie Burrow***	6-1	245	Sr.
	38	Barrett Ruud	6-2	220	Fr.
WLB	9	Mark Vedral***	6-1	210	Sr.
	17	T.J. Hollowell*	6-0	220	So.
LCB	3	Keyuo Craver***	5-10	190	Sr.
	28	Pat Ricketts*	5-11	180	So.
FS	27	Willie Amos*	6-0	185	So.
or	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
ROV	14	Dion Booker***	6-1	205	Sr.
	21	Philip Bland	6-0	205	Fr.
RCB	5	DeJuan Groce**	5-10	190	Jr.
or	16	Erwin Winney***	6-0	185	Sr.
P	19	Kyle Larson	6-0	205	So.

NOTRE DAME OFFENSE

SE	21	Javin Hunter**	6-0	191	Sr.
	18	Ronnie Rodamer	6-4	210	So.
LT	78	Jordan Black**	6-6	318	Sr.
	63	Brennan Curtin*	6-8	305	Jr.
LG	79	Sean Mahan**	6-3	292	Sr.
	67	Ryan Gillis	6-3	296	Jr.
C	52	Jeff Faine*	6-3	296	Jr.
	72	Ryan Scarola**	6-5	308	Sr.
RG	65	Sean Milligan	6-4	295	Jr.
or	76	John Teasdale***	6-5	305	Sr.
RT	75	Kurt Vollers**	6-7	312	Sr.
	70	Jim Molinaro	6-6	295	Sr.
TE	84	John Owens***	6-3	270	Jr.
	14	Gary Godsey*	6-7	270	Jr.
QB	10	Matt LoVecchio*	6-3	205	So.
	7	Carlyle Holiday	6-3	218	So.
FB	36	Tom Lopienski**	6-1	249	Sr.
or	40	Jason Murray**	6-1	260	Sr.
TB	12	Tony Fisher**	6-2	226	Sr.
or	22	Julius Jones**	5-10	220	Jr.
FLK	6	David Givens**	6-3	212	Sr.
	3	Arnaz Battle***	6-1	210	Sr.
PK	13	Nick Setta*	5-11	175	Jr.

NOTRE DAME DEFENSE

LE	98	Anthony Weaver***	6-3	286	Sr.
	92	Kyle Budinscak	6-4	265	So.
DT	60	Darrell Campbell*	6-4	296	Jr.
	77	Greg Pauly	6-6	280	So.
NG	94	Andy Wisne**	6-3	285	Sr.
	50	Cedric Hilliard	6-2	290	Jr.
RE	44	Grant Irons***	6-5	275	Sr.
	95	Ryan Roberts**	6-2	262	Sr.
OLB	30	Rocky Boiman***	6-4	240	Sr.
	81	Jerome Collins	6-4	242	So.
ILB	51	Tyreo Harrison**	6-2	242	Sr.
	2	Carlos Pierre-Antoine*	6-3	241	Jr.
ILB	33	Courtney Watson*	6-1	232	Jr.
	41	Mike Goolsby*	6-3	240	So.
LCB	42	Shane Walton**	5-11	186	So.
	38	Preston Jackson	5-9	176	So.
SS	5	Ron Israel***	6-0	212	Sr.
	20	Gerome Sapp*	6-0	214	Jr.
FS	28	Donald Dykes**	5-11	195	Sr.
	19	Glenn Earl*	6-1	210	Jr.
RCB	15	Clifford Jefferson**	5-9	176	Sr.
	34	Vontez Duff*	5-11	192	So.
P	17	Joey Hildbold**	5-10	188	Jr.

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

NEBRASKA

vs.

NOTRE DAME

SEPT. 8, 2001

**HUSKERS HARPOON IRISH IN A SEA OF RED,
SPOIL NOTRE DAME VISIT TO MEMORIAL STADIUM!**

PICKS

Brian Hill Editor

Notre Dame has the usual unknowns entering its opener. Nebraska has played twice and still has a lot of questions. Notre Dame has lost six straight when it plays on the road at night, by an average of 18 points. The Huskers are 9-1 at home under the lights. But the real difference is senior Eric Crouch vs. sophomore Matt LoVecchio. **Nebraska 23, Notre Dame 17**

Mike Babcock Contributing Editor

Remember Frank Solich's first season as head coach? A much-anticipated non-conference game against Washington at Memorial Stadium became a 55-7 rout. Could this be a repeat? It could, but not of the Washington game in 1998. Rather, expect a repeat of last season's game at South Bend. The Cornhuskers will be hard-pressed to win the first of three big home games. **Nebraska 24, Notre Dame 23**

NOTRE DAME AT NEBRASKA

Terry Douglass Grand Island (Neb.) Independent Sports Editor

Last year's game was a thriller: Two traditional powers battling into overtime in a classic setting on a beautiful day for football. Expect more of the same, except for the fact that it's a night game, of course. An overtime field goal tips the scales for the Huskers. **Nebraska 13, Notre Dame 10**

Blue & Gold Illustrated

Notre Dame matches up well offensively and defensively, and has the edge on special teams predicated on last year's efforts. Few college squads rival Notre Dame's experience and depth on offense. Crucial to the outcome is if the veteran Irish defensive line can stack the line, stuff the run and force Nebraska's suspect passing game to produce. As long as the Irish don't get mentally beaten before the game, there are several reasons to believe they can win at Lincoln. **Notre Dame 24, Nebraska 20**

BY THE NUMBERS

Nebraska vs. Troy State

Sept. 1, 2001 • Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.

Score By Quarters

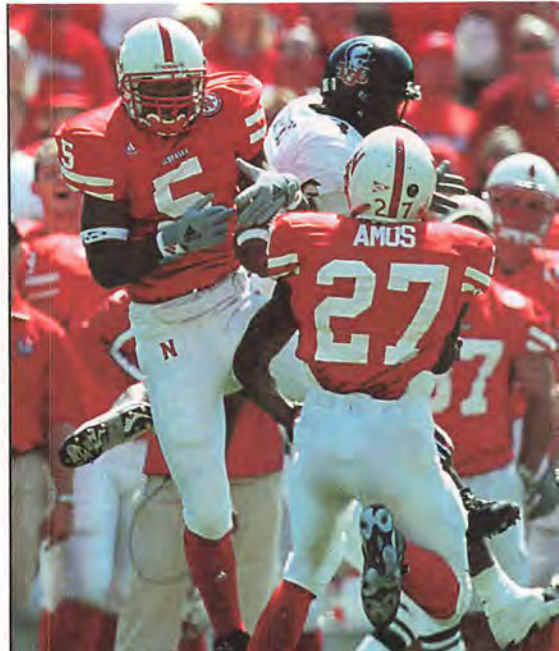
Troy State	7	7	0	0	—	14
Nebraska	14	14	7	7	—	42

Team Stats

	TS	NU
First Downs	13	25
Rushing	3	19
Passing	7	5
Penalty	3	1
Rushing Attempts	35	60
Yards Gained Rushing	83	345
Yards Lost Rushing	108	15
Net Yards Rushing	-25	330
Net Yards Passing	190	127
Passes Attempted	36	16
Passes Completed	15	9
Had Intercepted	2	1
Total Plays	71	76
Total Net Yards	165	457
Avg. Gain Per Play	2.3	6.0
Fumbles-Lost	4-1	3-2
Penalties-Yards	8-53	4-60
Punts-Yards	7-279	2-99
Avg. Per Punt	39.9	49.5
Punt Returns-Yards	1-9	6-67
Interceptions-Yards	1-7	2-0
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	1-20
Kickoff Returns-Yards	4-67	2-34
Possession Time	27:31	32:29

Scoring

TS — Demontray Carter 9-yard run (Drew Boteler kick)
NU — Dahrran Diedrick 1-yard run (Josh Brown kick)
NU — Eric Crouch 1-yard run (Brown kick)
NU — Jon Clanton 20-yard fumble recovery (Brown kick)
NU — Diedrick 11-yard run (Brown kick)
TS — Heyward Skipper 31-yard pass from Brock Nutter (Boteler kick)
NU — Diedrick 33-yard run (Sandro DeAngelis kick)
NU — Thunder Collins 7-yard run (DeAngelis kick)
Att. — 77,812
Temp. — 76



DeJuan Groce (5) knocks away a pass, and Willie Amos (27) makes the interception.

2001 SEASON STATS

RUSHING

Name	G	Att.	Yds.	YPG	TD
Diedrick, D.	1	25	177	177.0	3
Collins, T.	2	25	123	61.5	3
Crouch, E.	2	39	117	58.5	2
Kriewald, S.	2	5	24	12.0	0
Brye, C.	1	1	17	8.5	0
Grixby, D.	1	8	15	15.0	0
Davies, J.	2	4	11	5.5	0
Lord, J.	1	3	5	2.5	0

PASSING

Name	G	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	2	18-33-2	54.5	260	0
Lord, J.	1	1-1-0	100.0	18	0

RECEIVING

Name	G	No.	Yds.	YPC	YPG	TD
Thomas, W.	2	8	136	17.0	68.0	0
Wistrom, T.	2	6	74	12.3	37.0	0
Gibson, J.	2	3	52	17.3	26.0	0
Collins, T.	2	1	12	12.0	6.0	0
Golliday, A.	2	1	4	4.0	2.0	0

FIELD GOALS

Name	G	Att.	Good	Long
Brown, J.	1	1	0	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	20	488	48.8	56

DEFENSE

Name	G	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	S/Yds.
Rudd, B.	2	6	9	15	0	0	0
Burrow, J.	2	3	8	11	3-12	0	1-9
Craver, K.	2	5	3	8	0	0	0
Vedral, M.	2	2	6	8	1-1	1-0	0
Kelsay, C.	2	3	5	8	4-9	0	1-5
Shanley, S.	2	2	5	7	1-4	0	0
Hollowell, T.J.	1	3	4	7	1-1	0	0
Adams, D.	2	1	6	7	1-11	0	1-11
McPherson, L.	2	5	1	6	1-8	0	1-8
Amos, W.	2	2	4	6	0	1-0	0
Ricketts, P.	2	5	0	5	0	0	0
Bland, P.	2	3	2	5	1-2	0	0
Nelson, C.	2	2	3	5	2-4	0	0
Booker, D.	2	3	2	5	0	0	0
Smith, J.	2	2	3	5	3-17	0	2-15
Groce, D.	2	3	2	5	0	0	0
Slechta, J.	2	0	4	4	2-2	0	0
Lohr, J.	2	3	0	3	2-12	0	2-2
Kabongo, P.	2	0	3	3	0	0	0

TEAM STATISTICS

Total Offensive Yards	767	351				
Plays	144	121				
Average Per Play	5.3	2.9				
Average Per Game	383.5	175.5				
Net Rushing Yards	489	31				
Attempts	110	63				
TDs Rushing	8	1				
Net Passing Yards	278	320				
Completions	19	26				
Average Per Pass	8.2	5.5				
Average Per Catch	14.6	12.3				
Average Per Game	139.0	160.0				
TDs Passing	0	2				
Sacks By-Yards	10-87	7-52				
Fumbles-Lost	6-1	4-27				
Penalties-Yards	9-106	19-138				
Scoring	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	TOT
NU	27	14	15	7	0	63
Opponents	14	7	0	0	0	21

Individual Leaders

TROY STATE

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Carter, D.	11	44	4.0	20	1
Skipper, H.	1	18	18.0	18	0
Black, L.	7	7	1.0	4	0
Cox, C.	1	5	5.0	5	0
Betterson, D.	2	-1	-0.5	2	0
Lieb, L.	1	-11	-11.0	0	0
Team	1	-19	-19.0	0	0
Nutter, B.	11	-68	-6.2	1	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Nutter, B.	15-36-2	41.7	190	1

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Skipper, H.	4	81	20.3	31	1
Black, L.	3	31	10.3	22	0
Day, C.	2	29	14.5	29	0
Carter, D.	2	14	7.0	7	0
Samples, J.	1	16	16.0	16	0
Venises, T.	1	9	9.0	9	0
Lucas, C.	1	7	7.0	7	0
Felton, E.	1	3	3.0	3	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Ridgeway, R.	5	203	40.6	49
Lieb, L.	2	76	38.0	40

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Skipper, H.	1	9	9.0	9	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Carter, D.	4	67	16.8	19	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
McClain, J.	4	7	11	0	0	0
Sears, C.	5	3	8	1-1	0	0
Yamini, N.	2	6	8	0	0	0
Read, R.	5	2	7	0	0	0
Ansley, D.	4	2	6	0	0	0
Waldrop, B.	3	3	6	0	0	0
Umenyiora, O.	3	2	5	1-8	0	1-8
White, F.	2	2	4	0	1-7	0
Gamboa, J.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Farmer, R.	2	2	4	0	0	0
Harper, R.	1	3	4	0	0	0
Felton, S.	3	0	3	1-5	0	0
Jackson, D.	3	0	3	0	0	0
Williams, G.	2	1	3	0	0	0

NEBRASKA

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Diedrick, D.	25	177	7.1	38	3
Collins, T.	11	52	4.7	21	1
Crouch, E.	15	48	3.2	15	1
Kriewald, S.	3	21	7.0	11	0
Brye, C.	1	17	17.0	17	0
Davies, J.	2	10	5.0	9	0
Lord, J.	3	5	1.7	3	0

PASSING

Name	C-A-I	Pct.	Yds.	TD
Crouch, E.	8-15-1	53.3	109	0
Lord, J.	1-1-0	100.0	18	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	LNG	TD
Thomas, W.	5	83	16.6	36	0
Wistrom, T.	3	36	12.0	16	0
Gibson, J.	1	8	8.0	8	0

PUNTING

Name	No.	Yds.	Avg.	LNG
Larson, K.	2	99	49.5	56

PUNT RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Craver, K.	4	48	12.0	26	0
Groce, D.	2	19	9.5	16	0

KICKOFF RETURNS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPR	LNG	TD
Davis, J.	1	21	21.0	21	0
Bland, P.	1	13	13.0	13	0

DEFENSE

Name	UT	AT	TT	FL	Int.	Sacks
Rudd, B.	5	5	10	0	0	0
Hollowell, T.J.	4	4	8	1-1	0	0
McPherson, L.	4	1	5	1-8	0	1-8
Bland, P.	3	2	5	1-2	0	0
Lohr, J.	3	0	3	2-12	0	2-12
Kelsay, C.	2	1	3	0	1-0	0
Burrow, J.	1	2	3	2-6	0	1-5
Vedral, M.	1	2	3	1-9	0	1-9
Kabongo, P.	0	3	3	0	1-0	0
Hopkins, L.	2	0	2	2-23	0	1-12
Craver, K.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Ricketts, P.	2	0	2	0	0	0
Clanton, J.	1	1	2	1-15	0	1-15
Johnson, T.	1	1	2	0	0	0
Adams, D.	0	2	2	0	0	0
Terpening, A.	0	2	2	0	0	0

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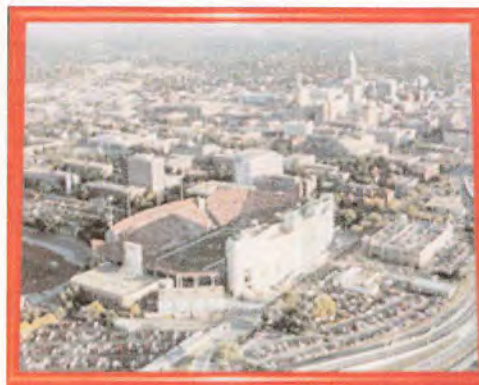
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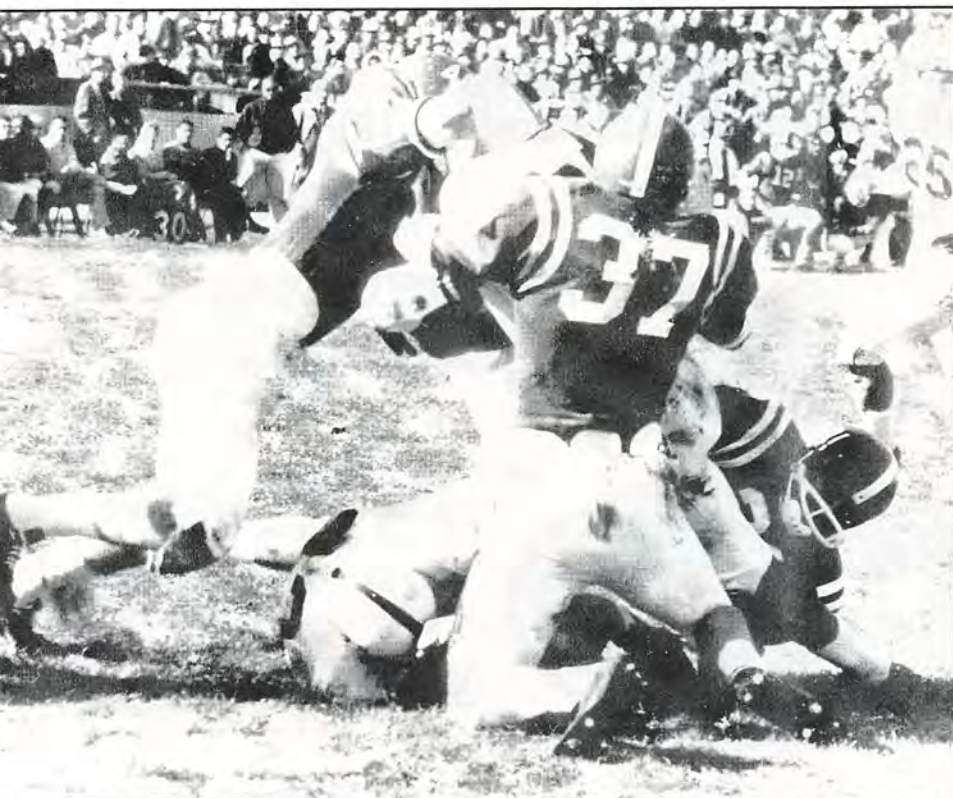
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Nebraska's Don Fricke (37) helps tackle an Oklahoma runner in the 1959 Homecoming game. The Cornhuskers defeated the Sooners 25-21 to end Oklahoma's conference unbeaten streak.

There Was Something in the Air

*Wilkinson's mighty
Sooners brought long
win streak to Lincoln*

By Mike Babcock

Great Games at Memorial Stadium

Second in a Series



Nebraska continues to enjoy amazing success in the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium. Entering the 2001 season, the Huskers are 81-3 at home the last 13 years and carry a streak of 239 consecutive sellouts. Since it opened in 1923, Memorial Stadium has been the site of many great games. In each issue during the 2001 season, Huskers Illustrated will feature one of those games.

A sign posted in the Nebraska football locker room in the north fieldhouse at Memorial Stadium during the last week of October 1959 read: "Let's not make it 75."

The reference was to Oklahoma's string of 74 conference games without defeat.

Coach Bud Wilkinson's mighty Sooners were coming to Lincoln for Nebraska's Homecoming game, looking to extend a 16-game winning streak against the Cornhuskers.

Oklahoma had yet to lose to Nebraska under Wilkinson.

Even though the Sooners had lost non-conference games against Northwestern and Texas, they were still the scourge of the newly formed Big Eight, last losing to a conference team in 1946 — 16-13 to Kansas.

Since then, the only blemishes on their conference record were ties in 1947 and 1952.

To make matters worse for Nebraska, the Sooners' streak had nearly come to an end the previous week against Kansas. But they had squeaked by in their Homecoming game, 7-6.

"Through the years, it has become axiomatic that the team which draws Oklahoma the week after the Sooners are pressed is in for trouble," Don Bryant, sports editor of the Lincoln Star, wrote.

"The Wilkinsons do not take kindly to embarrassment."

While Oklahoma was holding off Kansas, the Cornhuskers were losing at Missouri 9-0. The loss was their third in a row and fourth in six games. They had scored only 10 points in the losses, prompting one sports writer to describe them as "complete strangers in the wonderful land of touchdowns."

Considering Nebraska's offensive ineptitude, and the aura surrounding an Oklahoma program that had established an NCAA record by winning 47 consecutive games from early 1953 to late 1957, there was little reason to anticipate anything except another Cornhusker loss.

Oklahoma was favored by two touchdowns or more. Noted sports writer Will Grimsley of the Associated Press picked the Sooners, 20-0. The Dunkel Index had them 15-point favorites.

The potential for an upset seemed remote enough that the university advertised general admission tickets the week of the game. The \$2.50 tickets, 3,000 of them, were available at the NU Coliseum. Youngsters could buy knothole-section tickets for 50 cents the morning of the game.

The knothole sections were bleachers beyond the north and south end zones, boys at one end, girls at the other. Memorial Stadium's capacity was 38,000, give or take a few. The game would attract 32,765. Two weeks earlier, 34,471 had watched Nebraska lose to Indiana, 23-7.

Several downtown theaters competed with the Cornhuskers for the entertainment dollar. The Nebraska offered a double feature, for example, "Francis Covers the Big Town"

and "Ma and Pa Kettle on Vacation." You could see "Tarzan the Ape Man" with new Tarzan Denny Miller at the Lincoln or Cecil B. DeMille's "Samson and Delilah," with Victor Mature and Hedy Lamarr, at the Stuart.

Despite the odds against Coach Bill Jennings' team, Paul Schneider, Nebraska's colorful head trainer, was convinced the Cornhuskers were going to beat Oklahoma. Predict a Sooner victory in the newspaper, he told Bryant, his long-time friend. But "bet on Nebraska. We're going to win."

Bryant gave the nod to the Sooners, 26-7.

Those who put stock in omens might have pointed to small events that signified something out of the ordinary was about to occur, that perhaps Schneider's intuition was sound.

Oklahoma's arrival in Lincoln on Friday afternoon was delayed slightly, when the team charter was prevented from landing at the municipal airport until a B-47 headed for the Lincoln Air Force base was allowed to land first because of what was described as a "routine malfunction."

The Sooners were greeted by rain, driven by a chill wind. And when Wilkinson got off the plane, he was

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carrying, instead of wearing, a top-coat because someone had taken his in error.

A member of Oklahoma's official party was quoted in the next day's paper: "It's just one of those years. Everything is going wrong. Now even the players are swiping the coach's coat."

Jennings was at the airport to greet Wilkinson, for whom he had once been an assistant. Jennings, who was from Norman, played for Coach Tom Stidham's Sooners in the late 1930s and returned after a stint in the Marines to serve as backfield coach for seven years, resigning after the 1953 season.

He got back into coaching at Nebraska, joining Pete Elliott's first staff in 1956. When Elliott left after one season, for California, Jennings became the head coach. He was extremely popular with his players, but his teams lacked consistency, pulling dramatic upsets but losing more often than not.

The most dramatic of those upsets during his tenure was arguably the most dramatic upset in Cornhusker history — 25-21 to end Oklahoma's 74-game conference streak in 1959.

The team that had been a "stranger in the wonderful land of touchdowns" scored three, the second on guard LeRoy Zentic's 36-yard

return of a badly shanked punt in the second quarter. Those 18 points, combined with two field goals and an extra-point kick by Ron Meade were enough.

Meade's second field goal, which accounted for Nebraska's final points, came with 7:20 remaining and made the score 25-14. Meade then thwarted the Sooners' attempt to pull out a victory by intercepting a desperation pass in the end zone with 25 seconds remaining on the clock.

Oklahoma dominated statistically, but Nebraska had a marked advantage in the kicking game. In addition to Zentic's unexpected punt return, diminutive Pat Fischer returned a punt 61 yards to set up the Cornhuskers' third touchdown to make the score 22-14 with 9:56 remaining.

Nebraska averaged 41 yards on seven punts. Oklahoma averaged 30.8 on nine, some of which came on second or third down because the Sooners played a field-position game.

Nebraska took a timeout with 1 second left in the third quarter so that Harry Tolly could punt with the wind at his back. The Sooners returned the punt to their own 27-yard line, and on the first play of the fourth quarter, Oklahoma's Wahoo McDaniel punted it back to Nebraska, on first down.

Such field-position strategy was commonplace at the time.

After his interception in the end zone, Meade, a quarterback, took the snap at his own 20 and pushed ahead, starting the clock and sending the Sooners to the sideline as the final seconds elapsed.

Students stormed the field and the goal posts came down. Chancellor Clifford Hardin, who was caught in the onslaught, announced on the field that classes would be called off on Monday. Sections of the downed goal posts were deposited on the lawn of the governor's mansion.

Jennings, fully clothed, was given an impromptu shower by his players.

"Good thing I wore these cheap shoes," he said.

The Cornhuskers had heeded the sign in the locker room. ■



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Hardly A Secret Weapon

*Husker All-American
is glad to be back
after redshirt season*

By Todd Henrichs

Jokingly, Nancy Metcalf was asked if using her married name would somehow confuse the competition during her senior season at Nebraska.

"Probably not," was her wry reply. You see, six-foot left-handers with her kind of devastating leap and arm swing have a way of standing out in a crowd.

Certainly, no one at last month's State Farm Women's Volleyball Classic seemed confused seeing Nebraska's No. 7 with a new last name.

Finally cut loose from her redshirt season, Metcalf was welcomed back with a big glass trophy honoring the most valuable player of the preseason tournament.

The former Nancy Meendering led Nebraska in kills as the Huskers beat back-to-back top 15-ranked opponents. With Metcalf back in the lineup, they're virtually everyone's pick to repeat as national champions this season.

"She's gone to another level," Nebraska Coach John Cook said of his not-so-secret weapon. "Every time she takes a swing at the ball, she can kill it."

"When she jumps and reaches and hits like that, she's making it look really easy. It's impressive to watch."

After taking last year off competitively — she still practiced with the Huskers — Metcalf has faced a gauntlet of questions already this fall.

How did it feel to step on the court for that first practice? How about the first match? The first kill?

"Exciting," is her pat answer, as if there was much else she could say.

Scott Babin

Senior right-side hitter Nancy Metcalf, an AVCA first-team All-American in 1998 and 1999, is back to lead the Huskers after sitting out last season as a redshirt.

Metcalf is trying to play it cool, to not step in and steal all of the lime-light away from last season's heroes. The national championship and unbeaten season were special times indeed.

Therefore Metcalf generally avoids talk of how personally trying times were a year ago. When the decision to redshirt was made, she held out hope of making the U.S. Olympic Team for the 2000 Games in Sydney.

And the popular belief was Nebraska's championship run was still a year away. The Huskers had a new coach, a first-year starting setter and two other sophomore starters.

"To me, the fact they went undefeated was definitely a surprise," Metcalf said. "I don't think you ever expect a team to do that.

"But the fact that they were as good as they were didn't surprise me. The team had the leadership they needed, and you could see they had the skills."

Only weeks into the 2000 season, Nebraska was considered a leading title contender. When they went to No. 1 in the poll, Cook and Metcalf had another talk just to make certain she was comfortable with the decision.

"Sure," she said, probably not knowing exactly what was ahead. Nebraska sailed unbeaten into the NCAA Tournament, where South Carolina suddenly threatened to end it all. As Nebraska fought back, Metcalf ached to do something more than simply cheer on her teammates from the bench.

Even while storming the court after championship point of the final four, a bit of an empty feeling existed. The title wasn't really hers.

Back at the team's hotel in Richmond, Va., that night, Metcalf's teammates made sure she was included.

"People said to me, 'you had a part in this,' and that, 'you prepared us for it in practice,'" Metcalf said. "In that sense, it really wasn't empty. It made me feel good to know that, yeah, I kind of made a difference."

Metcalf has stepped back into the right-side position filled so admirably by Angie Oxley last season. She'll be asked to pick up some of Oxley's load as a primary passer in addition to all of the offensive and

blocking weapons she brings.

Metcalf even developed a jump serve during her year away from the spotlight.

Cook insists Nebraska still must not rely too much on Metcalf. When she last played in 1999, Nebraska lost every match in which she had at least 30 kills.

That's fine and dandy with Metcalf, who figures to be more dangerous without having to carry a team on her back. As for motivation: "I don't think there will be a player in the country that is going to be more determined to win the national championship," Cook said.

Metcalf intends to graduate in

December, and then possibly play professionally overseas for a time. The 2004 Olympics isn't something Metcalf says she thinks a lot about although she's virtually a shoe-in to make the team.

Whatever happens, her husband, Jason — they were married in March — likely will delay plans to attend chiropractic school until whenever Nancy's volleyball career is done.

The rings that bind them are strong, tighter even than an intense desire to win the championship.

"There's no doubt in my mind that that's our goal," Metcalf said. "And if we don't get there, it'll be sad for me." ■

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High Hopes



All-American Latham puts team goals ahead of individual honors

By Sean Callahan

Sometimes having a backwoods knowledge can pay off in major dividends.

For eight years, John Walker has coached the Nebraska women's soccer program and has led his teams to an impressive 126-24-3 record.

The main ingredient for Walker's success with the Cornhuskers has been recruiting players from the most unlikely of talent beds, his home country — Canada.

Going into the 2001 season, the Huskers are looking to better their 22-2 mark from last year and erase a disappointing NCAA Tournament loss to Connecticut.

Playing a key role for Walker this season will be another Canadian find — Christine Latham.

Only a junior, Latham has already set her self up to be one of the best NU players of all time. A nomination for the Hermann award, given to collegiate soccer's outstanding player, is just one of the many preseason accolades the Calgary native has already received.

Even with all the hype, Latham said she's not letting the attention throw her focus away from the team goals.

"It was a surprise to me that I was up for the award," Latham said. "I don't expect to be singled out as any kind of good player. I just went out there last year, and I played my best, and I obviously got some results out of it.

"But I didn't feel that my results were reflected in being nominated as one of the best players in the country. There are tons of good players in the country, so I don't really feel I'm different from any one of them."

After an excellent sophomore season in which Latham led Nebraska with 57 points en route to being named a first team All-American and Big 12 player of the year, it's easy to see why such big things are expected from her.

Walker, who has coached Latham since her days on the

Forward Christine Latham produced the second-best single-season offensive output (57 points) in Husker history as a sophomore en route to becoming the first underclassman to win the Big 12's player of the year honor.

Scott Babin

Under-21 Canadian National team can see the progress she has made in her game.

Walker said Latham not only has the physical attributes to dominate a soccer game but the mental makeup as well.

"Soccer is a funny game," Walker said. "You can dominate a game territorially, but if you don't have people who can finish, then you're going to struggle."

"We've been fortunate basically over the last four or five years to always have that. With Christine, a lot of her goals come from sheer aggression."

Walker likes to compare Latham's instinct for the goal to another sport.

"She's almost like a shooter in basketball," Walker said. "Her confidence doesn't get affected if she misses a shot. The next one, in her mind, is going in. And if she doesn't score one game, the next game is the game where she can score several. That mentality is contagious as well."

"She really does a great job up front of leading the group. And I think the area of her game she's improved the most is maybe the defensive side. She's really completed herself as a player."

The progress Latham has made throughout her soccer career is something she doesn't like to give herself too much credit for.

Instead, she reflects it all back on the man who brought her to Nebraska.

"He (Walker) has done everything for me not just on the field but off the field, too," Latham said. "He's given me guidance and direction that I need to achieve things both on and off the field."

"Any coach can sit there and say, 'I've taught her this, I've taught her that,' but of course he's taught me that. But it's been so much more. And he knows how much he's helped me, and I appreciate him for that."

When it is all said and done, Latham should shatter most of NU's all-time offensive records.

Her success makes Walker proud to see how far she's come.

"Leaving here, she certainly should be one of the most dominant players we've ever had," Walker said. "She's on track to do that, and if she continues to work at it, she should have a bright future in soccer for many years to come." ■



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Florida Presence Key for Huskers

NU hopes to maintain Southeast pipeline

By Doug Horwich

The Southeast, a lucrative recruiting ground for the Nebraska football program in the early 1990s, was not a productive territory during the remainder of the decade.

However, the Huskers have enjoyed a renewed success in the Southeast recently, receiving commitments in the past two years from Georgians Terrell Butler and Le Kevin Smith, Tennessee twins Daniel and Josh Bullocks and Florida native Rodney Burgess.

Nebraska appears to be in position to maintain the Southeast recruiting pipeline this season, as it is high on the lists of a number of very strong prospects from the region.

No southeastern state has more Division I prospects than Florida,

Running back Tre Smith of Venice, Fla., lists Nebraska and Florida as his top two schools.



and this year is no exception. Nebraska coaches limit their recruiting effort in the state to a handful of truly outstanding prospects, because their philosophy is that if they're going to go all the way to Florida to recruit, they want difference-makers. Many of these players are also being recruited by in-state powers Florida, Florida State and Miami, which usually ensures a substantial battle in obtaining their signatures.

However, Nebraska has a stronger early presence in Florida this year than it has had in the recent past. One player who has been showing a great deal of interest in the Huskers is running back Tre Smith (5-foot-10, 190 pounds, 4.5) from Venice High School in Venice, Fla. Smith rushed for 1,886 yards and 36 touchdowns last year and had 500 receiving yards, three kickoff returns for touchdowns and three punt

returns for touchdowns.

"Florida and Nebraska are my top two schools," Smith said. "Nebraska is probably a little bit higher than Florida right now. They have been sending me more handwritten letters and appear to be recruiting me harder."

The Huskers have a slight advantage in recruiting Smith, in that they are the only team to have offered him as a running back — his preferred position.

"Most schools are looking to bring me in as an athlete — to play the slot and to return kicks," Smith said. "Nebraska wants me at running back. I probably prefer running back a little."

In addition to scholarship offers from Florida and Nebraska, Smith has also received offers from Georgia, Vanderbilt, Duke, Southern Florida, Central Florida, Kansas, Auburn, and Rutgers.

"I'm getting a lot of mail from other schools too," Smith said. "Michigan and Miami both send me quite a bit of mail."

Smith will almost certainly come to Lincoln for an official visit and could possibly make an early decision.

"I'm going to visit Nebraska for sure," Smith said. "I'll visit some time early in the season. I'll go to a few of the Florida games unofficially, too, since I only live three hours away."

The Huskers also have their eyes on massive offensive guard Max Jean-Gilles (6-5, 340, 5.2) from North Miami Beach High School in Miami Beach, Fla.

"I have over 30 offers," Jean-Gilles

Nebraska Commitments for 2002

Player	Hometown (school)	Ht.	Wt.	Pos.
Curt Dukes	Newton (Newton-Conover), N.C.	6-2	210	QB
Matt Herian	Pierce, Neb.	6-5	225	TE
Mark LeFlore	Omaha (Central), Neb.	6-0	185	WR
Kurt Mann	Grand Island, Neb.	6-4 1/2	255	OL
Jay Moore	Elkhorn, Neb.	6-4 1/2	245	RE

said. "Miami, Nebraska, Florida, South Florida, Notre Dame, Wisconsin, Ohio State, Tennessee, Georgia, Kansas State, Michigan, Iowa State, LSU, Penn State, and Arizona are some of the schools that have offered. It's been hard to keep up with all of it."

A dominating run blocker, Jean-Gilles recorded more than 100 pancake blocks last season, earning second-team All-Dade County honors. He was a third-team All-State selection.

"I have good movement," Jean-Gilles said. "I'm good at pulling and coming around the corner."

Although cold weather and distance are often an issue for Florida prospects, they won't factor into Jean-Gilles' decision.

"It doesn't really matter if I stay in-state or leave," he said. "As far as the weather, snow and cold won't bother me because I'll have to play in those conditions eventually anyway if I make it to the NFL."

Jean-Gilles prefers run blocking to pass blocking and enjoys contact.

"I love to run the ball down the opponent's throat," he said. "Nebraska runs the type of offense that I like, so I like them. They play that in-the-face, run-it-right-at-you type of style that I like to play."

Jean-Gilles' high school coach also likes the Husker program.

"He really likes Nebraska because of their in-your-face style," Jean-Gilles said. "He kind of patterned our offense off of theirs."

One of the best cornerbacks in the country is Fabian Washington (5-11, 170, 4.4) from Bradenton's Bay Shore High School. The speedy corner had an outstanding junior season, recording 60 tackles, 15 pass break-ups and three interceptions.

"I have good speed and quickness," Washington said. "Coaches say that I am what they are looking for in a cornerback."

Despite having more than 20 offers, Washington has already narrowed his list of schools to a top-three.

"I like Nebraska, Florida State and Alabama," he said. "I would like to visit all three of those schools before making a decision. Florida State may have a slight edge, although Nebraska is close behind."

Floridians Part of NU Title Runs

By Rick Shaw

The state of Florida factored in prominently to Nebraska's national championship runs in 1994 and 1995.

Nebraska nabbed Tommie Frazier and Tyrone Williams out of Bradenton in 1992. Both players were All-Conference performers for the Cornhuskers during those championship runs. Nebraska is looking to steal a few more difference-makers from the Sunshine State in 2001 with hopes of repeating history.

One player that Nebraska would like to steer to Lincoln is Buster Davis. Davis, a 5-foot-10, 225-pound outside linebacker from Mainland High School in Daytona Beach, has Nebraska on his early top seven.

"I have over 45 scholarship offers," Davis said, "but I've managed to narrow down things to a top seven or eight teams. I like Penn State, Florida State, Notre Dame, Georgia Tech, Nebraska, Syracuse, and USC. I was a big Florida State fan growing up, so the Seminoles may have the edge right now."

Early in the summer, Davis was listing Nebraska as his top choice. Davis admits that he likes the Cornhuskers but is uncertain about traveling all the way to Nebraska for college.

"I like Nebraska," Davis said. "They were the first school to offer me in early April. I was ready to commit to them right then. The Nebraska coaches are really nice, and have been recruiting me very hard. I am definitely considering the Huskers, but my parents think that Nebraska might be too far away. I think there is about a 50 percent chance that I will leave the state of Florida for college."

Distance will not be a factor in the decisions of two Florida offensive line prospects. Max Jean-Gilles (6-5, 340 pounds), an offensive guard prospect from North High School in Miami Beach, has scholarship offers from more than 30 schools. Jean-Gilles claims no favorites but admits that he would like to play in a run-based offense.

Anthony Wollschlager (6-6, 295 pounds), an offensive tackle prospect out of St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Ft. Lauderdale, is another big man that the Huskers have their eyes on.

Wollschlager lists a top three of Miami, Michigan, and Notre Dame but admits that Nebraska is quickly rising on his list. He said that he has been impressed by the recent flux of recruiting attention that the Nebraska staff has been showing him. Nebraska's efforts may be rewarded by a visit this winter from this big-time tackle.

The Nebraska coaching staff is definitely making its presence known down in the state of Florida in 2001. It's been a few years since Nebraska secured a football commitment from that talent-rich state. If early reports from recruits are any indication, Nebraska is in position to make some noise in the state this year and re-open the pipeline that was once so good to it. ■



Linebacker Buster Davis has Nebraska on his list.

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Although the Seminoles have yet to offer, they will be evaluating his senior season and could end up offering.

Nebraska has already offered Washington and has been in frequent contact.

"I've talked to Coach Jamrog a couple of times," Washington said. "I like him a lot. Nebraska runs a lot of press coverage and man-to-man, and I like that. They seem to have a great football atmosphere there, and their defensive backs coach seems to be pretty good.

"Their defensive backs don't get burnt deep very often."

Washington said his mother also likes what she's heard from the Husker coaches.

"My mother likes Nebraska and Florida State the best," Washington said, "but she has had more of a chance to talk to the coaches from those two schools, too."

Like Jean-Gilles, weather and distance will not play a role in Washington's decision.

"It doesn't matter how far away the school is," he said. "I'd prefer a warmer climate, but I could adapt to a colder place too. That won't be a problem."

Washington will likely take a few visits before deciding but is not opposed to the idea of an early commitment.

"There's a possibility I will commit after one visit if I really like the school," he said. "We will just have to see how things go."

Nebraska is also in on one of the nation's top middle linebacker prospects, Taurean Charles (6-3, 230, 4.55) from Northwestern High School in Miami. His early favorites are Rutgers and North Carolina State, but the Huskers have made up substantial ground in the past few weeks and are starting to make quite an impression.

Charles, who bench presses 375 pounds and has an impressive 36-inch vertical jump, is also looking at Oklahoma, Auburn and Florida State, and all favorites have offered except for the Seminoles.

Nebraska coaches will continue to pursue Charles and appear to be in line for a visit. He has indicated that he's receiving two or three letters every day from the Husker staff. ■

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ACROSS

- 4 2000 national champion
- 6 Big 12 opener
- 7 1993 national champion
- 8 NU's No. 30
- 11 Nickname before Cornhuskers
- 13 Network for Notre Dame game
- 14 1997 Lombardi winner
- 16 NU's No. 56
- 17 Oct. 13 opponent
- 20 Notre Dame nickname
- 24 NU's No. 8
- 26 1997 Outland winner
- 28 1994 national champion
- 30 Jamie Burrow's home state
- 31 NU's No. 70

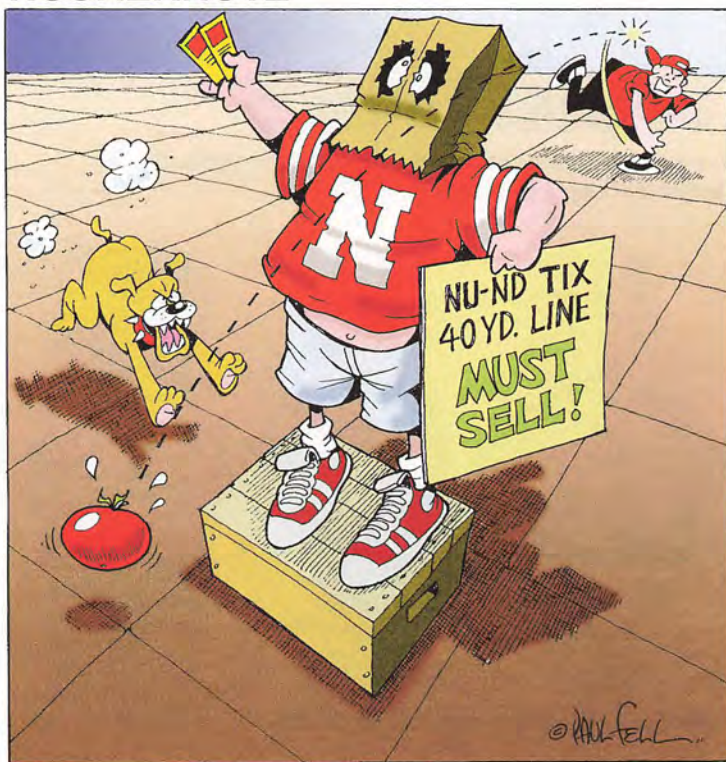
DOWN

- 1 NU's linebacker coach
- 2 Tracey Wistrom's home state
- 3 Former Notre Dame coach
- 5 Nov. 10 opponent
- 9 NU's No. 7
- 10 Nebraska's oldest rival
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- 29 Opponent after Notre Dame



Answers in Sept. 15 issue

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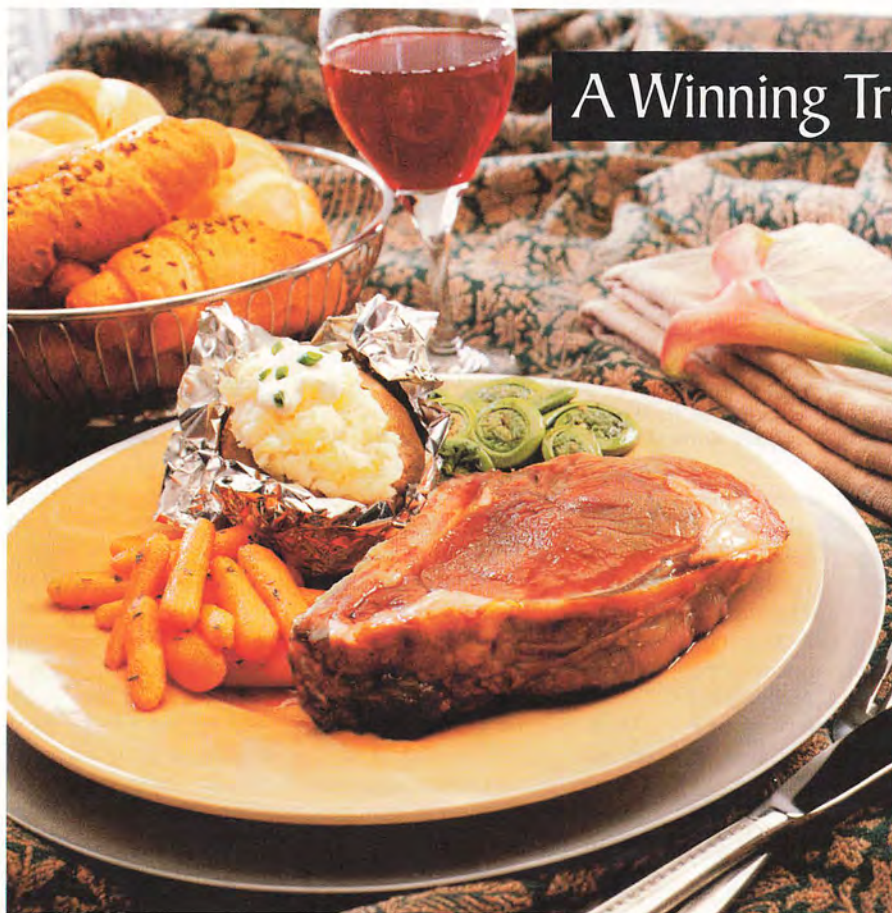
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Ready Or Not, It's Irish Time

*Nebraska has had two games to prepare,
but Notre Dame could 'zero in' on the Huskers*



**Mike
BABCOCK**

NO DISRESPECT TO TROY STATE, or to Texas Christian for that matter, but Nebraska has been looking ahead to Notre Dame — just a little. Rush end Chris Kelsay even admits it, reluctantly.

"Sorry to say, Notre Dame is in the backs of our minds," he said after the Cornhuskers' 42-14 victory against Troy State. "The big games are always in the back of your mind.

"Guys have been thinking about Notre Dame."

Not a lot, mind you. The Cornhuskers would never do that. Until now, they couldn't "focus on Notre Dame too much," said weakside linebacker T.J. Hollowell. But, he added, because the defense is playing well, "you want to think about big games, making big plays in big games."

The defense made some big plays against Troy State. But that was to be expected.

Nevertheless, "I think we took a step forward today," Kelsay said.

That Nebraska was able to take a step forward against the overmatched Trojans should be an advantage when Notre Dame visits Memorial Stadium for the first time since 1948.

The Fighting Irish have yet to play. And now Nebraska has played twice. So they "might make some mistakes that we've been making," said I-back Dahrnan Diedrick.

The difference is, the Cornhuskers have had a game to correct those mistakes.

"Having two games under our belts, we're more ready," nose tackle Jon Clanton said.

Not necessarily, according to Coach Frank Solich, whose job it is to interpret such things. Notre Dame has been able to devote all of its attention to Nebraska during its pre-season practices.

"Zero in on us," is how he put it. "So it balances out a little," he said.

Irish Coach Bob Davie might have completely revamped his offense, installed a single wing offense, for all anyone knows. He might have dug up some musty, nine-men-on-the-line defensive alignment that the Cornhuskers haven't seen since the days of one-platoon play and Paul Hornung.

Remember that Oklahoma State game at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium in 1998? The traffic jam on Interstate 435 could have represented the jam-up of Nebraska's offense that night. The Cowboys used a defense Nebraska hadn't seen in breaking down film, and nearly fashioned an upset.

Davie has two Nebraska games to break down and study. All the video Nebraska has of Notre Dame is from last season, so the Fighting Irish could be doing lots of things differently. And as the Oklahoma State game illus-

trated, the changes needn't be more dramatic than spacing in the line.

Whether one game at a time or not, it's reasonable to assume Solich was conservative in his approach to the Troy State game, keeping it simple so as not to show Notre Dame too much.

Even so, the Cornhuskers didn't look like the nation's No. 4-ranked team. And surprisingly enough, that's mostly because, for the second week in a row, they were inconsistent offensively.

Going into the season, the concern was defense. But the defense has played with an aggression that was missing a year ago, while the offense has struggled. Against TCU, the offensive line had problems protecting quarterback Eric Crouch. Against Troy State, the offense simply stalled far too often.

Also, the play of Nebraska's special teams has been erratic, which is of particular concern given the fact that breakdowns in kick coverage nearly cost the Cornhuskers at Notre Dame last season.

The possibility, of course, is that this Nebraska team plays to the level of its competition, and that Notre Dame will bring out the best in the Cornhuskers, the way Washington did in 1998.

Nebraska looked sluggish in games against Louisiana Tech, Alabama-Birmingham and California, but then destroyed a Washington team that came to Lincoln ranked No. 9, 55-7.

You can never underestimate the Cornhuskers' ability to play at a high level at home.

After the Troy State game, Solich was asked his comfort level.

"I would say any time you face a program like Notre Dame's and the kind of athletes they have, you never have a great comfort level," he said. "But I feel good about the effort.

"We need to play, at times, smarter football. We need to be under control a little more. There

were a couple of personal foul-type of penalties and one unsportsmanlike (conduct) on Dahrnan's run."

Diedrick was penalized apparently for taking a single, long, Deion Sanders-type stride as he crossed the goal line at the end of a 33-yard touchdown run in the third quarter.

"Those kind of things in games when it's coming down to the wire are things that cost you," said Solich.

The Cornhuskers should be in good health for the Notre Dame. Senior cornerback Erwin Swiney has yet to play because of a high ankle sprain, but Hollowell returned from an ankle sprain, and it appeared Nebraska came away from the Troy State game without significant new injuries.

Hollowell was happy to be back on the field, and able to play against Notre Dame.

"I think we're ready," he said. ■



**Chris Kelsay says "guys
have been thinking
about Notre Dame."**



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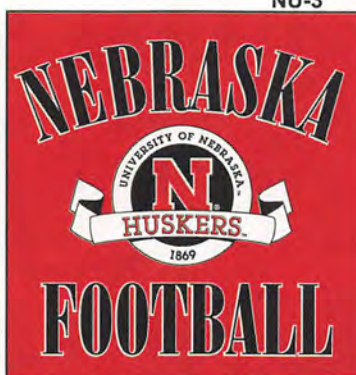
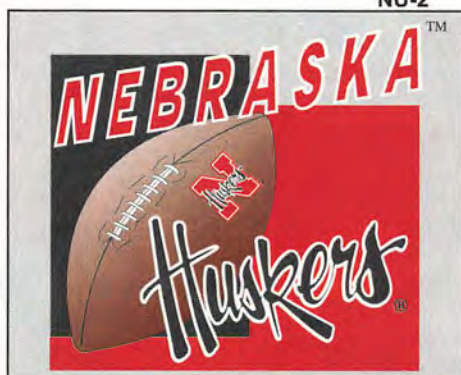
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NU-3

NU-4



NU-5

NU-6

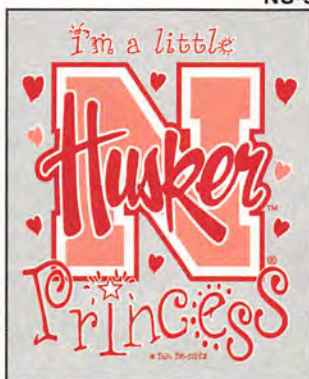
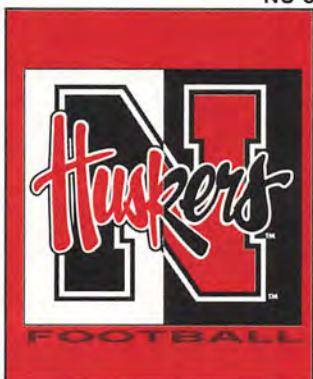
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NU-8

NU-9

NU-10



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